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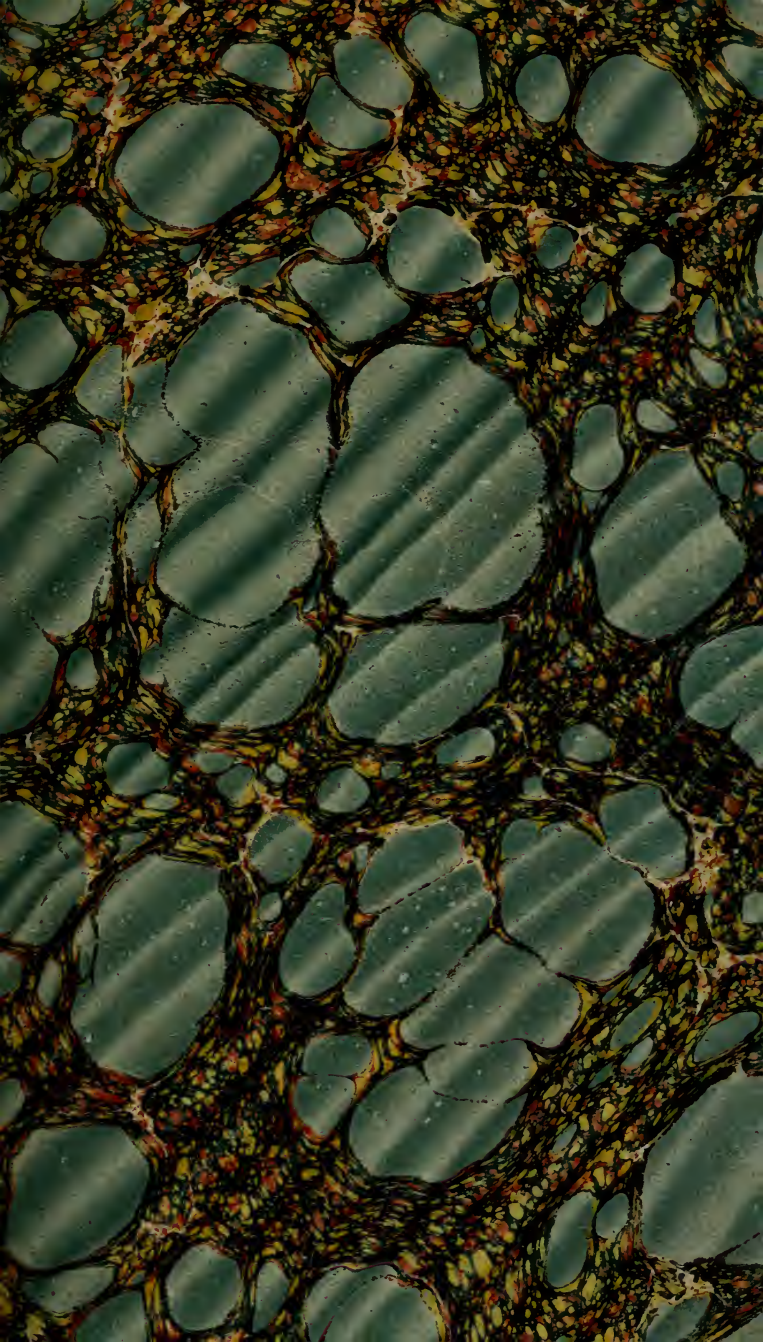
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*John Kepton of Can-fronke,
in the County of Hereford.*



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THE RIVALS.

TRACY'S AMBITION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE COLLEGIANS.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

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INTRODUCTION.

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THE first of the two following Tales was suggested during a ramble in the fashionable scenery of Wicklow. A gentle morning in Spring beheld the writer descending the sequestered road which leads to the Valley of the Seven Churches. This exquisite scene of loneliness and gloom was cheered at the moment by a partial gleam of sunshine, which shone on the deserted churches, and flung the shadow of the round tower (a gnomon raised by Time to count his centuries) across the uneven plain on which it stands. I paused to look upon the

lake which lay beyond the ruins ; a cold and motionless expanse of water, prisoned in by mountains of rugged granite, with scanty traces of foliage to qualify the rudeness of the clifted heights. Yet there was more of a religious sadness than of sternness or terror in the character of the scene. It was a fitting solitude for the abode of those who fled to its quiet sanctuaries in ages long gone by, to repair the passionate excesses of their youth, and meditate, in sorrow rather than in anger, on the thoughtlessness of men. Here it is, returning from the turmoil of London, and agitating pursuits, that the wanderer feels all the folly and idleness of the life which he has led ; that his heart sickens at the recollection of the dissipation of cities, that he opens his soul to nature as to a long forsaken mother, and thinks, with an aching bosom, of the purity, the simplicity, the religious regularity of his childhood. Here it is that we seem once more, in the keenness of awakened memory, to lose those friends that have been

snatched away from us by death or distance ; that the still reproaches of that mysterious principle in our nature, which points to the eternal object of our existence, steal upward through the tumult of our passions and our interests, and speak to our hearts, like the voice of a long forgotten friend. The rocks and woods, the lakes and waterfalls, the ruins and the sober day-light, and the whisper of the persuasive wind, in scenes like this, convince the heart more readily than volumes of ingenious controversy, read over with aching head and weary eyes in the midnight chamber. Here we feel the truth that is too bright even for the eagle eye of reason to contemplate. Ambition seems a dream, philosophy a guess, our spirit seems to mount above its tenement, and to behold the passions, the faculties, the sciences, and the occupations of man at that leisurely elevation where alone it can become acquainted with their relative value. Here we discover all the superiority of virtue over knowledge, and remember, with all that

zest which feeling gives even to the oldest truths, those fundamental principles of virtue, which in our days of feverish enquiry we were accustomed to despise for their want of novelty. As the thrilling music of the christian churches, first drew those tears from the eyes of Augustine which he afterwards shed from a purer and loftier impulse, so here we are won back to the love of innocence by the poetry of nature. She reproaches us with having so long preferred, to her infinite varieties of form and colour, of sound and fragrance, the coarseness of scenic imitations, and all the low artificial mockeries of her excellence which the palaces of art present us. She seems to open her arms and invite us to "return!" to blush for the meanness of our taste—to forsake the theatre, the picture gallery, the library; and to study character in her towns and villages, beauty in her plains and valleys, sublimity in her mountains, and wisdom in the economy of her mighty system.

I was endeavouring to decypher the characters on an enormous granite rood or cross, which stands in the grave yard of the Cathedral, when a singular looking figure approached me from the road. He was a young man with a finely formed head and face, resembling the Jewish in its best conformation, a mass of light hair slightly curling, and a handsome beard, about an inch and a half in length, which, if worn in affectation, was affectation certainly in its best taste. Touching his hat as he came near, he offered his services as cicerone during my ramble round the lake, enhancing their value at the same time by informing me that he had acted as guide to a number of celebrated literary characters; indeed, to all the well known people who had visited the lakes within the last ten years. As a farther inducement, he told me that some of those individuals, availing themselves of information which he had given them, “bein’ great ould historians themselves, and havin’ recoorse to other ould histhories,

at home, between 'em all had magnified that place to a very great pitch." Like honest Lien Chi Altangi, who bought a silk night-cap which he did not want, because the duke of ——— had had some off the same piece, I accepted the services of George Winder, in compliment to all the "well known people an' ould historians," for whom he had performed the same office.

Feeling an honest ambition to give value for his money, George immediately commenced operations with a volubility characteristic of his vocation. Before we had reached St. Kevin's bed, a recess in the cliff of Lugduff, extremely difficult, and sometimes dangerous of access, he had proved himself an antiquarian, geologist, conchologist, and moral philosopher. He had got a collection of fossils, shells, and old coins, some of which must have been curiosities indeed, for they were issued, he said, "in the time of Nero, two hundred years after the creation." He demonstrated, likewise, that Ireland must have enjoyed a flourishing commerce with

foreign nations before the English Conquest, and pointed out to me in evidence of his assertion the sculptured uprights of the chancel window of the cathedral, which he said were made of Portland stone. Following, with much effort, the torrents of erudition which he poured forth, I traced, with still greater exertion, the steep and slippery path which led down the cliff to the bed of the celebrated saint. My guide now and then complimented me on my perseverance, while I affected a smiling ease, at the same time that I cast a shy glance at the lake which lay perpendicularly beneath me, and felt inclined to exclaim with Cobbler Sly, “ ’Tis a very excellent piece of work, would ’twere over ! ” This feeling became more sincere, when I approached a particular crisis in the descent, where the climber has to creep down a solid mass of rock, seize hold of a projecting stone, and swing himself over the brow of the cliff, into the recess which appears hewn underneath, and which is hid from his eyes until the moment when he enters it.

Here I truly found myself, in the laconic phraseology of old Judy, of Roundwood, "a gent. goin' down the rock of diff." This feat being performed, Wiunder gave me, for my pains, a long account of the beautiful legend of Cathleen, and informed me that there was at a little distance a spot called Turn-about Point, which was the scene of a still more arduous feat than that which we had performed. It consisted in proceeding along a narrow shelf made in the perpendicular side of the rocky mountain, until the adventurer approached a point where he must either turn round, at the imminent danger of falling into the Lake, or remain stationary, for it admitted neither of possible progress, nor of safe return.

"Indeed?" said I, "very curious it must be."

"I'll show it to your honour, if you like to try it. I don't doubt but your honour would do it, afther the other."

"Ha —"

“An’ we’ll have the boat waitin’ below, to pick your honour up if you fall.”

“I’m afraid it is too far,” said I, in a careless manner, “only for that.”

“’Tis in the next cliff, sir,” said George, “’tis a great thing to do. Three to one o’ what tries it falls off into the lake.”

“Hum!”—

“There was one drowned below these indeed, not long ago.”

“Indeed?”

“This is the way, sir, if you’ll folly me, we’ll soon come to it.”

I thought it better, however, affecting at the same time a careless air, to put off the adventure to another opportunity; the day was now advanced, and I thought I should’nt mind it that time.

Returning to the Inn at Roundwood, the story of Cathleen, rendered more interesting and impressive by my own experience of the danger she had dared, came back upon my mind, as I sat in the window at evening, and filled it

for hours. Although the world's poetical ear is said to be out of tune, I will venture to relate, in metre, a legend which never should be told in prose. There are associations always attending compositions of this kind which make them more interesting to the affections of the writer than they may ever become to another ; but those who are familiar with the wild scenery of Wicklow may find some interest in it.

THE FATE OF CATHLEEN ;

A WICKLOW STORY.

I.

IN Luggelaw's deep-wooded vale,
The summer eve was dying ;
On lake, and cliff, and rock, and dale,
A lulling calm was lying;
And virgin saints and holy men
The vesper song were singing,
And sweetly down the rocky glen
The vesper bell was ringing.

ii.

Soft gloom fell from the mountain's breast,
 Upon the lake declining ;
 And half in gentle shade was drest,
 And half like silver shining—
 And by that shore young Kevin stands,
 His heart with anguish laden;
 And timid there, with wreathed hands,
 A fair and gentle maiden.

iii.

And, " Oh," she said, " I've left for thee
 My own beloved bowers,
 The walks I trod in infancy,
 My father's ancient towers.
 I've left for thee my natal hall,
 Where late I lived in splendour,
 And home and friends and fame and all,
 I sighed not to surrender."

iv.

" Away!" he muttered low ; " in youth
 A vow to heaven I've spoken,
 And I will keep my boyish truth
 To age and death unbroken.
 Oh, would'st thou bribe my heart to sin
 Against that high endeavour,
 And cast those tempting eyes between
 That heaven and me for ever?"

v.

The maid looked up in still surprize,
 Her cheeks with tear-drops streaming,
 A guileless light was in her eyes,
 Like childhood's sorrow gleaming.
 "Oh, had I here a heaven to give
 Thou should'st be blest this hour ;
 Then how should *I* thine hope bereave
 Of that eternal dower ?

vi.

" Ah, no—Cathleen will ask no more,
 For home and friends forsaken,
 Than here upon this peaceful shore
 To see the morn awaken :
 Beneath thy holy roof to dwell
 A lorn and timid stranger ;
 And watch thee in thy lonely cell
 In sickness and in danger.

vii.

To rouse thee when the cowed train
 Their matin beads are telling,
 To hear young Kevin's fervent strain
 Amid the anthem swelling.
 To smile whene'er thy smiles I see,
 To sigh when thou art sighing,
 To live while life is left to thee,
 And die when thou art dying."

viii.

“ My prayers,” he said, “ were little worth,
 While thou wert kneeling near me ;
 My hymns were dull as songs of earth,
 If thou went by to hear me.
 Oh, you are young and guiltless still,
 To sin and shame a stranger,
 And what to thee seems pure from ill
 To me looks dark with danger.

ix.

“ There is a heaven in yon blue sphere,
 Where joy abounds for ever,
 There may we fondly meet, but here,
 In this cold exile, never.
 There may we look with loving eyes
 While happy souls are singing,
 While angel smiles light all the skies,
 And the bells of heaven are ringing.

x.

“ But here—but here—ah, fair Cathleen,
 Through all this wide creation,
 In all that's bright there lurketh sin,
 In all that's fair, temptation.
 It tracks the steps of young Delight,
 When souls are gay and tender ;
 It walketh in the dark midnight,
 And in the noonday splendour.

xiv

xI.

“ It murmurs in the rising wind
 That stirs the morning flowers,
 On Friendship’s lap it lies reclined,
 And sighs in Love’s own bowers.
 It shines o’er all the summer skies,
 When dews the wild buds cherish ;
 And, worst of all, in woman’s eyes,
 Ah, hide them ! or I perish.”

xII.

The maiden calmly, sadly smiled,
 She plucked an opening flower,
 She gazed along the mountain wild,
 And on the evening bower.
 “ I’ve looked,” she said, “ from east to west,
 But sin has never found me ;
 I cannot feel it in my breast,
 Nor see it all around me.

xIII.

“ The light that fills those summer skies,
 The laugh that flows the freest,
 I’ve marked with loving ears and eyes,
 Nor saw the ill thou seest.
 I always thought that morning air
 Blew on my bosom purely ;
 The worst I find in all that’s fair,
 Is that it fades too surely.

XV

XIV.

“ If it be sin to love thy name,
 And tire of loving never,
 Why am I spared the inward shame
 That follows sin for ever?
 For I can lift my hands and eyes
 To that bright heaven above thee ;
 And gaze upon the cloudless skies
 And say aloud—I love thee !

XV.

“ I had a brother in my home
 I loved—I love him truly ;
 With him it was my wont to roam
 When morn was breaking newly.
 With him I've cheered the weary time
 With cruit * soft or story,
He never spake of secret crime,
 Of sin, or tainted glory.

XVI.

“ But thou ”--“ But I,” young Kevin said,
 “ Will love thee like that brother ;
 And wilt thou be content, sweet maid,
 To find in me another ?
 And seek ye but a brother's grace,
 A brother's calm caresses—”
 The maiden hid her burning face
 Within her golden tresses.

* A small harp.

xvi.

xvii.

“ Farewell!” she sighed, “ I plead in vain,
 My dream of love is ended ;
 Thy thoughts of me with thoughts of pain
 Shall never more be blended.
 But now the even is falling late,
 The way is long and lonely,
 Oh, let me rest within thy gate
 Till morning rises, only.”

xviii.

Young Kevin paused—the dew fell chill—
 The clouds rolled black and swelling ;
 Ah no—he could not deem it ill
 To lodge her in his dwelling :
 For churls like Nabal deeply sin
 And lasting pains inherit,
 And those who take the stranger in
 Have patriarchal merit.

xix.

But oft he thought, 'mid holy strains,
 Upon that lovely woman ;
 For, oh, the blood within his veins
 Was warm, and young, and human.
 He told his nightly beads in vain,
 Sleep never came so slowly ;
 And all that night young Kevin's brain
 Was filled with dreams unholy.

xvii

xx.

The young man rose at dawning hour,
 To chaunt his first devotion,
 And, tiptoe, then, to Cathleen's bower
 He stole, in still'd emotion.
 Breathless above the maiden's form
 He hung—and saw her sleeping ;
 Her brow was damp—her cheek was warm,
 And wore the stains of weeping.

xxi.

Beside her couched an aged hound
 (Her Kevin's sole attendant),
 One hand his sable neck around,
 Like light in gloom resplendent.
 The dog sprung up, that hand fell down,
 As Kevin's sigh came deeper,
 He crouch'd him at his master's frown,
 And never woke the sleeper.

xxii.

And scenes of calm domestic bliss
 On Kevin's soul came thronging ;
 Endearments soft, and smiling peace,
 And love, the young heart's longing.
 Why did he swear in youth to live
 For saintly duties only ?
 And leave those joys that love can give,
 To lead a life so lonely ?

xviii.

xxiii.

Oh!—were he now a bridegroom gay!
 Lord in his natal tower,
 And were this morn his bridal day,
 And this his marriage bower :—
 Where were the wondrous ill he said
 To him, to earth, to Heaven?
 Just then, the dreamer turned her head,
 And murmured deep “My Kevin!”

xxiv.

He started, trembled, burned, his limbs
 Shook with the sudden passion;
 His eye in sudden moisture swims
 And stirs in maniac fashion.
 A whirlwind in his brooding soul
 Arose and tossed it madly;
 Then swift away the storm clouds roll,
 And leave him drooping sadly.

xxv.

Again, that fond impassion'd moan
 Upon her warm lip lingers,
 He stoops and twines within his own
 Those white and taper fingers.
 He bends—ah, hark! the convent toll!
 Another knell! another!
 They peal a requiem to the soul
 Of a departed brother!

xxvi.

Up, and away ! With freezing blood
 He rushes from the bower,
 And seeks the beechen solitude,
 Beside the convent tower.
 There hooded maids and cowled men
 The dirge of death were singing,
 And sullen down the rocky glen
 The knell of death was ringing.

xxvii.

He raised to Heaven his hands and eyes,
 Lone, in the silent morning,
 And said, through humble tears and sighs,
 " I bless thee for the warning !
 Oft dost thou thus with sounds of awe
 My slumbering soul awaken :
 If I forsake thy love and law
 Oh, let me be forsaken !

xxviii.

" Thou hast a golden crown for those
 Who leave earth's raptures hollow,
 And firmly still through wiles and woes
 The light of virtue follow.
 Oh, be this weak heart still thy care,
 Be still my soul's defender,
 And grant that crown for me may wear
 No soil upon its splendour.

XX

XXIX.

" If tears, and prayers, and vigils lean,
 A sin like mine may cover,
 I'll weep while summer woods are green
 And watch till time is over.
 But mighty armour must I weave
 Against that tempting woman,
 For oh, she haunts me morn and eve,
 And I am weak and human."

XXX.

A counsel woke within his heart,
 While yet the youth was kneeling,
 It whispered to his soul—" Depart,
 And shun the war of feeling.
 Courage on battle fields is shewn
 By fighting firm and dying,
 But in the strife with Love alone
 The glory lies in flying."

XXXI.

Swift as the sudden wind that sings
 Across the storm-roused ocean,
 Swift as the silent prayer that springs
 Up, warm, from young Devotion,
 Swift as the brook, the light, the air,
 As death, time, thought, or glory,
 Young Kevin flies that valley fair,
 That lake and mountain hoary.

xxi

xxxii.

And far away, and far away,
 O'er heath and hill he speeds him,
 While virtue cheers the desert grey,
 And light immortal leads him.
 And far away, and far, and far
 From his accustomed fountain,
 Till quench'd in light the morning star
 And day was on the mountain.

xxxiii.

In Luggelaw's deep-wooded vale
 The summer dawn was breaking,
 On lake and cliff and wood and dale
 Light, life, and joy were waking,
 The skylark in the ear of morn
 His shrilly fife was sounding,
 With speckled side, and mossy horn,
 The deer were up and bounding.

xxxiv.

Young Nature now all bustlingly
 Stirs from her nightly slumber,
 And puts those misty curtains by
 Her mighty couch that cumber.
 And dews hang fresh on leaf and thorn,
 And o'er each eastern highland,
 Those golden clouds at eve and morn
 That grace our own green island.

xxxv.

Light laughed the vale, gay smiled the sun,
 Earth's welcome glad returning,
 Like Valour come when wars are done,
 To Beauty in her mourning.
 The night calm flies, the ruffling breeze
 Sports on the glancing water,
 And gently waves the tangled trees
 Above the chieftain's daughter.

xxxvi.

Like one in pain, athwart her brow,
 One hand her hair draws tightly,
 Now falls that glance in tears, and now
 It glimmers quick and brightly.
 For she has missed her votive love,
 Within his lonely bower,
 Nor is he in the beechen grove,
 Nor in the convent tower.

xxxvii.

"I fear," she sighed, and bowed her head,
 "I fear he told me truly,
 That sin is in the sunshine bred,
 And roses springing newly ;
 For dreary looks this bower to me,
 Even while those roses wreath it ;
 And even that sunshine beaming free
 Hides something dark beneath it.

xxiii

xxxviii.

“That dew—” she paused. What foot has been
Upon its early brightness?
And left a track of deepening green
Across its silver whiteness?
She traced it by the ravell’d brake,
And by that silent fountain,
And o’er that lawn, and by that lake,
And up that hoary mountain.

xxxix.

But there the thirsty morning sun
Had dewless left the heather,
Her eye, o’er all that desert dun
No single trace can gather.
Yet on she went, for in her breast
Deep passion fierce was burning;
Passion, that brooks not pause nor rest,
And sickens at returning.

xl.

And far away—and far away—
O’er heath and hill she speeds her,
While Hope lights up that desert grey,
And Love untiring leads her.
And far away—and far—and far
From lake and convent tower,
Till div’d in gloom day’s golden car,
And night was on the bower.

XXIV

XLI.

Now thridding lone the rugged Scalp
 With wounded feet and weary,
 Now toiling o'er each mimic Alp
 Of Wicklow's desert dreary.
 Oh, lonely Bray, thy basin'd tide
 She passed at sunset mellow,
 And Ouler's lake when far and wide
 Its haunted flame shone yellow.

XLII.

Night fell—day rose—night fell again,
 And the dim day-dawn found her
 On Glendalough's deep bosomed plain,
 With lake and cliff around her.
 There, tired with travel long and vain,
 She sinks beside that water,
 For woe and toil and wasting pain
 Have worn the Chieftain's daughter.

XLIII.

Tall, darkening o'er her, high Lugduff
 Gathered his lordly forehead,
 And sheath'd his breast in granite rough,
 Rent crag and splinter horrid.
 His helm of rock beat back the breeze
 Without a leaf to wreath it,
 The vassel waves rolled in to kiss
 His mailed foot beneath it.

XXV

XLIV.

Sudden, with joyous yelp and bound
A dog comes swiftly by her ;
She knows—she knows that aged hound,
And he she loves is nigh her !
The warden flies—she follows swift—
The dangerous footway keeping,
Till deep within the jagged clift
She found her Kevin sleeping.

XLV.

With hair tossed out, and hands clench'd tight,
The rugged granite hugging,
Like those who with the Hag of Night
For voice and breath are tugging.
For oh, he had a horrid dream,
And every nerve has felt it ;
And ruin was the gloomy theme,
And Cathleen's hand had dealt it !

XLVI.

He dreamed that at the golden gate
Of Heaven, flung wide and gleaming,
He heard soft music as he sate,
And saw bright pinions beaming :
Millions of sainted shapes he saw,
In light and fragrance ranging,
And calm delight, and holy awe,
In speaking looks exchanging.

XXVI.

XLVII.

He strove to join that angel band,
 But in the porch before him,
 With mocking eye and warning hand,
 Cathleen stood glooming o'er him ;
 She thrust him from the sainted crowd,
 The gates rung clanging after,
 And on his ear came long and loud
 A peal of fearful laughter.

XLVIII.

Again it opes, again he tries
 To join that glorious vision,
 Again with lifted hands, and eyes
 Deep fixed in keen derision :
 That minion of the burning deep
 Stands wrapt in gloom before him,
 Up springs he from his broken sleep,
 And sees her trembling o'er him !

XLIX.

“ Vengeance ! ” he yelled, and backward toss’d
 His arms, and muttered wildly :
 The frightened maid her forehead crossed,
 And drooped before him mildly.
 “ Oh, slay me not—Oh, Kevin, spare
 The life thy Lord has given ! ”
 He paused, and fixed that barren stare,
 Upon the brightening heaven.

xxvii

L.

“ Cathleen,” he sighed, “ that timely word
 Has left my hands unbloody ;
 But see, the early morning bird,
 Sings in the sunshine ruddy.
 Before that matin strain be o’er
 Fly far, and hate, and fear me ;
 For Death is on this gloomy shore,
 And madness haunting near me.”

LI.

With clenched teeth, and painful smile
 (Love’s last despairing token),
 She flung her arms around him, while
 Her heart beat thick and broken.
 She clasp’d him as she would have grown
 Into his breast for ever :
 Then fixed her gaze upon his own,
 And sternly whispered—“ Never !”

LII.

Again, again ! those madding dreams
 Upon his soul awaken,
 The fiend athwart his eye ball swims—
 Those golden gates are shaken !—
 Again he hears that wringing mock
 The vision’d stillness breaking,
 And hurls the maiden from the rock
 Into the black lake, shrieking !

xxviii

LIII.

Down gazed he, phrenzied, on the tide—
Cathleen ! How comes he lonely ?
Why has she left her Kevin's side
That lived for Kevin only ?
What mean those circles in the lake
When not a wind is breathing
What bubbles on the surface break ?
What horrid foam is wreathing

LIV.

Oh, never more—oh, never more,
By lake or convent tower,
Shall poor Cathleen come timid o'er
To haunt his evening bower.
Oh, never more shall that young eye
Beam on his prayer and break it,
And never shall that fond heart's sigh
Thrill to his own and wake it.

LV.

The fiend that mocks at human woes
Frowned at that maniac minute,
For well the baffled demon knows
The hand of Heaven was in it.
Oh, tempted at that saintly height,
If they to earth sunk lowly,
She ne'er had been an angel bright,
Nor he a victor holy.

Aye, they are in their bowers of rest,
 With light immortal round them ;
 Yet pensive heaves the pitying breast
 To think how soon it found them.
 The lark ne'er wakes the ruddy morn
 Above that gloomy water,
 Where sudden died, and passion-lorn,
 Cathleen, the Chieftain's daughter.

There was a tomb in the burying ground, respecting which my guide told me a story which furnishes the subject of the first of these Tales. I have not been deterred from using it, by the recollection of a too celebrated Italian novelist, nor of the two greatest of the English competitors of Shakespeare. It appeared to me still virgin ground, for the legend is really an Irish one, and appropriate to the romantic scenery among which its events are laid. Accordingly I have used it, in the phraseology of my guide, to "magnify the place," but to what "pitch," it rests with the reader to determine.

With respect to the second Tale, "Tracy's

Ambition," I shall say nothing by way of preface, but leave the autobiographer to speak for himself. I have been unwilling to suppress any portion of his manuscript, although the reader may think him sometimes needlessly minute, and even garrulous. There were one or two incidents, such as the quarrel between the two hags on their comparative pretensions to beauty in their young days, which from the homeliness of its style I was inclined to modify; but I thought, after all, that it had a rough fidelity to Nature, and that mighty mother is far above the reach of conventional ideas of refinement.

THE RIVALS.

THE RIVALS.

CHAPTER I.

“DOCTOR, darling!”

“Docthor, I’m here since mornin’!”

“Docthor, let me go, an’ the heavens bless you. I’m as wake as a piece of wet paper.”

“Glory to your soul, docthor, asthore, an’ gi’ me something for this thremblin’ I have. I do be thrembling always, like a straw upon the water.”

“Docthor, I *hear* a great pain in my foot,

sir. I declare I cried that bottle full to-day morning, with it."

"That was a fine physic you ga' me last night, long life to your honour. It walked me all over. It sarched me finely, long life to your honour."

"There is'nt a bit I ate, docthor, this time back, but what I get a *conceit* again' it the minute afther."

"Docthor, I can make no hand o' my head at all, these days."

"Oh, docthor, what 'll I do at all with these ears o' mine? I'm partly deaf always, an' whenever I do be, I hear great sounds an' noises, waves dashin' again' the bank, and birds whistlin' an'—boo! an' candlesticks; an' when I'am deaf entirely, it's then I hear all the bells in Ireland ringin' in my ears."

"Docthor, I have a great *express* upon my heart."

"That girl, sir, that you saw yesterday even-

ing was very bad entirely afther you goin'. Oh, she began screechin' in a manner, that if the priest was at the doore, you'd think he would'nt overtake her; an' every bit of her so hot, that you'd imagine the clothes would light about her, an' her face the whole time as red as if you threw o' bowl o' blood in it."

"Docthor, a' ra gal! Docthor, darlin', Docthor, asthore! Oh, ma gra hu! Ma grein chree hu, Docthor! an' let me go!"

Such were a few of the eloquent instances addressed by the throng of patients, without the rails, to Doctor Jervas, one of the attending physicians to a dispensary in a country district of Ireland. Accustomed to the din, he remained with an undisturbed countenance, looking alternately into the haggard, robust, blooming, pale, fair, young and ancient faces that were thrust forwards through the wooden rails, and soliciting his sympathy. Three or four young disciples were hammering away at their mortars in different corners,

compounding, like so many Cyclops, the thunderbolts of this great dispenser of health or of its opposite. The scene around him was one which might have waked uneasy sympathies in the heart of a novice. On one side was a stout man roaring aloud in the agonies of tooth-drawing; on another, a victim to the same "queen of a' diseases," sat woefully, with hand to jaw, contemplating the torture of the sufferer, and inly ruminating his own approaching sorrow; here lay a stripling with bandaged arm and cadaverous cheek, just recovering with a sigh from the fit of syncope which had been induced by the operation of phlebotomy; and there knelt, with sleeve upturned, a young Esculapius, wounding, with ruthless lancet, the blue vein in the pretty foot of a girl as fresh as a garland. In one corner was an infant squalling and plunging on its mother's lap, in another the leader of a faction discomfited and head-broken, lamenting over the recollection of his broil, and groaning for

the priest. But all those sounds of woe and suffering saluted the ear of the medical adept with a merely mechanical effect, and he continued to prescribe with a countenance unmoved, amid the twang of iron pestles, the squalling of children, the vociferations of the old women, and the moans of the young, sent out from beneath their hoods, calling each in order to his side, and attending to their wants in turn.

At a door in the railing was placed an able-bodied man, whose duty it was to admit the patients one by one, to see that no more should pass at a time, and to prevent them from loitering on their return.

"Mary Mulcahy!" cried the physician, reading from a ticket which had just been handed in.

An old woman hobbled on crutches to the door. Jerry Duhig (the able-bodied man before mentioned) opened to admit her. A rush was made by the mob of patients outside. The

old woman was flung into the Doctor's arms, and Jerry himself was staggered from his balance. But, like a second Horatius Coccles, he arose in his anger, and confronted the invaders in the breach of which they had almost possessed themselves. The physician gave himself for a lost man when he saw the counterscarp thus furiously stormed. But Jerry stood his ground. He thrust right and left with his clenched fists, until he sent the crowd screaming and jostling back again without the door, with more cause of complaint than they had brought from home. As the old woman returned, Jerry, vexed at the outrage of which she had been the innocent occasion, caught her by the back of the neck, and sent her out at the door, crutches and all, at a rate more rapid than she had travelled since she was a young woman. She stumbled and fell among the crowd, exclaiming, in a tone between surprise and terror, "Oh, heaven forgive you your sins, you conthrairy man! Here's usage! Here's thratement!"

The Doctor proceeded.

“What’s the matter with your head, my good man?”

“A little defference I had sir with a naighbour, an’ he——”

“Broke it?”

“No, sir, only he hit up to me about my brothier that was thransported for night-walken’, an’ out o’ that——”

“He broke your head?”

“No, sir, only I retorted on him, in regard of his own father that was hanged for cow stealin’, an’——”

“He broke your head?”

“No, sir, only then you see, he made up to me and call’t me a liar, an’ with that I sthruck him, and with that he——”

“Broke your head?”

“Broke my head across.”

“Aye, that’s the point. One would think I was a justice of peace. What is it to me

what you fought about? The broken head is all I want."

"Faix, then, I could spare it to your honour now, an' welcome."

"Here, take that prescription to the young gentleman in the blue coat that's rolling the pills in the corner. Well, my young girl, what's the matter with you, my dear? Jerry, mind the door!"

A sudden roar from without proved that Jerry took the hint.

The young patient just addressed was a timid and pretty creature of sixteen, who hesitated for a considerable time, and glanced shyly on each side, as if afraid of being overheard. Pitying her embarrassment, and interested by her figure, the Doctor took her into an inner room.

"Well, my dear," he said, in a kind tone, "what's the matter? Come, don't be afraid of me, now. I'm your friend, you know." And he patted her on the shoulder.

The girl only sighed, and looked down.

“Well, my love, what have you to tell me? Come, come, now, no nonsense.”

“Something that’s come over me, sir, I’m in dread.”

“How is that?”

“A great pain I have on my heart, sir. There’s a boy livin’ over, near the Seven Churches, an’ I’m afeerd he did’nt use me well.”

“How so, my dear?”

“I don’t know, sir. But ever since I met him I feel quite altered some way. I’m always lonesome, an’ with a pain mostly on my heart, an’ what makes me think ’tis he that done it to me is, because when I go to his mother’s, an’ I find him at home, from that minute the pain leaves me, an’ I feel nothin’ at all until I come away again.”

“Oh, ho!” said the Doctor, “well, my dear,

I'll order you something ; but how is it you suppose that this lad did n't use you well, as you say? Come, now, no nonsense, you know."

The girl lifted the corner of a check apron to her eyes, and began to cry a little.

"Come now, my dear, dont keep me here all day. I can't cure you, if you won't tell, you know."

"To dance with him, I did, of a night, sir," she replied in a timid voice, and with a trembling lip, "an' when he was sittin' next me he gave me an apple, an' they tell me now that—"

Here she lifted her apron to her eyes and cried afresh.

"Well, well," said the Doctor, soothingly, "what then? Don't be afraid of *me*."

"They told me he put something in the apple, sir, to — to — make a fool of a person."

And, so saying, she hung her head, and drew the hood of her cloak around her face.

“Pooh ! pooh !” said the Doctor, “is that all ? Then you might be quite at peace, my dear, for he has not made a fool of you yet, at all events. Is this boy comfortable ?”

“’Tis Harry Lenigan, sir, that keeps the Latin school near the Seven Churches, an’ holds his place from Mr. Damer, of Glendearg.”

“And have you any fortune yourself, my dear ?”

“Fifteen pounds, my uncle left me, sir.”

“A very nice thing. Well, my dear, take one of these pills every second night ; and I would advise you generally, since you find it relieve your pain so much, to get into company with Harry, to be near him as much as you can conveniently ; and come to me again when those pills are out. If Harry should call at your house any time between this and Shrovetide, I would advise you not to be out of the way. Do you hear ?”

“I do, sir, long life to your honour.”

“But, above all things, be sure you take the pills.”

The girl promised to be careful, dropped a courtesy, and, heaving a gentle sigh, departed.

A loud knocking at the door now startled the physician.

“You’re wantin’ over, sir, in all haste,” cried the harsh and stormy voice of Jerry Duhig, “here’s Aaron Shepherd come to call you to see Mrs. Wilderming, that’s taken suddenly ill.”

This startling announcement occasioned an instantaneous bustle. The Doctor’s horse was ordered to the door, and he hurried out of the house, leaving the crowd of patients storming at Jerry, and Jerry roaring at them like Dante’s Cerberus,

——— who, thundering, stuns

The spirits, that they for deafness wish in vain.

CHAPTER II.

ALIGHTING at the door of a neatly finished mansion, he was ushered at once into the sleeping-chamber of the sick lady. She lay on a bed, apparently insensible. The window was raised, and the muslin curtain thrown down, so as at the same time to admit the air and to exclude or soften the light. Near the head of the bed stood a beautiful young girl, crying bitterly, but silently. One or two attendants

were preparing draughts in another part of the room and conversing under their breath.

The young lady gave her hand in silence to the physician. "Well, Miss Wilderming, any change since my last visit?" he asked in a whisper.

"A great change, for the worse, I fear, doctor," was the reply of the young lady.

And, at the same moment, they heard the patient murmuring some words aloud. The Doctor bent his head to listen.

"I'll see no more pleasant days at Roundwood," said the old lady; "my time is out. I'll be carried home to-morrow. My time is out."

The Doctor softly took her hand, and began to feel her pulse.

"'T will shortly stop," she murmured, "the number is told. Is my brother Damer come?"

"Not yet, ma'am," said the nurse.

"Then let him spare his speed, for I'll be cold before he sees me."

"You will see him soon, mamma," said

Miss Wilderming, creeping to the bed's side, and laying her hand upon her mother's forehead.

“ Ah, Esther, my darling.”

“ Are you better, mamma ? ”

“ Must I leave my child alone ? ”

“ Oh, you will soon be well.”

“ In heaven, I hope. Where's Richard Lacy ? ”

“ He called to know how you were, mamma, but it was before——”

“ Before the death-stroke. And he went away well satisfied. He will be surprised to hear of my death. Your uncle, Esther, will take care of you when I am gone. I wish your father had staid after me. But we'll watch you, my darling, when you cannot see us.”

“ Mamma !—”

“ Esther, I would die happy, if I had lived to see you married to Richard Lacy. He has some faults, but he loves you. Hear me, my child—I know you love him not, and I will

exact no promise from you. But I leave you a mother's last injunction. Give Lacy an indulgent hearing; repress him not too harshly; be his friend, at least, for my sake, and hear me, and remember my words—The day that shall make you lastingly his will throw sunshine on my grave."

Perceiving that the young lady was unable to restrain her affliction at this speech, the doctor led her out of the room and proceeded to examine into the condition of the patient. His diagnosis was wholly unfavourable.

He hinted as much to the nurse, and left the house, without again meeting Miss Wilderming. The morning verified his prediction, and Esther was left an orphan, under the guardianship of her uncle, Mr. Damer, of Glendearg. Why the parting injunction of her mother was delivered in a manner so solemn, why Esther should have refused to afford an instantaneous assent to a suit so highly sanctioned, why she

should continue to dwell for another year beneath her orphaned roof, receiving the visits of Richard Lacy, without altering in any degree that manner which her parent had lamented, are questions which cannot be understood without some insight into the history of the parties.

Like all young Irishwomen of quick keen feelings and lively fancy, Esther Wilderming had got a strain of patriotic enthusiasm running underneath a girlish simplicity of manner. Her motives to this sympathy were not merely general. During the "troubles" of the year ninety-eight her family had suffered deeply for the sins of the rival parties, and it was no wonder that a theme to which her ears had been accustomed from her childhood should become firmly embedded in her heart. What she felt strongly she expressed with energy; and this warmth of feeling, which shows so lovely in the young and generous, gave something more of depth to a character which was at no time trifling.

A circumstance occurred, when Esther had attained her sixteenth year, to give that character a still deeper hue of earnestness.

Near her paternal mansion stood an ancient seminary, at which a young student, named Francis Riordan, was at this time a boarder and a frequent visitor at the house of Esther's parents. The manner in which their acquaintance commenced had something in it that was calculated to take hold of an imaginative and susceptible mind. Esther had been accustomed, in her morning and evening walks, to meet a handsome young man sauntering along the hedge-rows with that air of abstraction which is the characteristic either of genius or of idiotcy, and is a folly and a fault wherever it is found. On some occasions, likewise, Esther thought his countenance wore a look of tender sorrow, that gave to his physiognomy an inexpressible and a mysterious charm. A man of business would have passed him by as an idle fool that would never come to good ; a man of the

world would have pitied him for a sensitive mope ; and any man of common sense would have recommended him to “leave his damnable faces” and go into society. But the quick fancy of the gentle Esther invested him with an interest, that was more attractive than any superficial talent, which he might acquire by a free and general intercourse with the mass of men. The figure pleased her eye, and she felt a pleasure in fitting it with a character. She fancied that he was, like herself, a person of talent and intense patriotism, and she was right.

They passed each other so frequently, that a degree of acquaintance imperceptibly sprung up between them. Riordan took off his hat and bowed when they met, and Esther became so accustomed to this courtesy, that the day glided by most loneliness whenever she missed the handsome student in her walk. On the other hand, if she happened to meet him as usual, she returned to her house with a heart full and

happy, and spirits overflowing even to extravagance.

She observed, one morning, that he looked paler than usual, and that his eyes looked dull and heavy. She felt something like a difficulty in passing him without an enquiry, and chided, in her heart, the chilling forms of society which prevented her from reaching her kind little hand to the student, and expressing, in words, the interest which she felt in his condition.

The next morning he looked still worse, and he seemed to feel that he was so, for he had wrapped himself in a cloak, and his step was more rapid than usual. On the following day he did not appear, and two tedious months rolled away before Esther saw him more.

A meeting had been called in a small neighbouring town, for the purpose of petitioning the legislature on one of those interminable topics of popular dissension which were unhappily too abundant in the national polity of her native island.

Weary of looking at the groups who hurried through the fields and along the distant road to the town, Esther drew the music-stool to her piano, and sung the following words to a well known air:—

Once I had a true love,
I loved him well, I loved him well;
But since he's found a new love,
Alone I dwell, alone I dwell.

I.

How oft we've wandered lonely,
Through yon old glen, through yon old glen;
I was his treasure only,
And true love then, and true love then;
But Mary's singing brought me
To sigh all day, to sigh all day;
Oh, had my mother taught me
To sing and play, to sing and play.
Once I had, &c.

II.

By lone Glencree at even
I passed him late, I passed him late;
A glance just sidelong given
Told all his fate, told all his fate;
His step no longer airy,
His head it hung, his head it hung;
Ah, well I knew that Mary,
She had a tongue, she had a tongue.
Once I had, &c.

III.

When spring is coming early,
And skies are blue, and skies are blue ;
And trees are budding fairly,
And corn is new, and corn is new ;
What clouds the sunny morrow
Of nature then, of nature then ?
And turns young hope to sorrow ?
Oh, fickle men ! oh, fickle men !

Once I had a true love,
I loved him well, I loved him well ;
But since he's found a new love,
Alone I dwell, alone I dwell.

Her song was interrupted by the entrance of some friends who came to offer her a seat to the meeting in their carriage. It was accepted immediately, and Esther with her friends soon after occupied a place in one of the galleries.

The crowd was great. There was first a speech from a very large man, and then another from a very little man, and then the very large man proposed a vote of thanks to a certain personage for drinking whiskey punch and bowing, which was seconded by the very little man. Es-

ther had never before been present at a meeting of this description, and she felt her forehead glow a little at the sycophantic applause with which this proposition was received by the multitude, for she thought, in her simplicity, that political questions were questions of justice and honour, and not of plain self-interest.

But was there no one to oppose the utter degradation, the servility, of such a vote as this? There was. A young man appeared upon the platform almost on the very instant when the chairman rose to put it to the meeting in the regular form. The latter immediately gave way, a hush ran through the assembly, the knot of orators upon the platform glanced at the stranger with enquiring eyes, the ladies eyed his handsome figure, and graceful, though hesitating, attitude, with that tender interest which is never refused by the female heart to the debutant untried, and there was one among them who turned pale and red, and trembled, and grew

cold and faint at his appearance. It was Esther, for in this young orator she recognised her long lost solitary.

The great attention which he received from the meeting seemed to depress the spirits of the young gentleman, and he glanced with an uncertain eye and a beating heart around the circle. The very tall orator, before mentioned, rolled himself round on his chair, and gave him a goodnatured, encouraging look. On all such occasions the great mass of the people are certain to act with kindness, but on a person constituted like young Riordan this had the most salutary effect. It was a stimulus he required, and he found it in a happy moment. Among the many faces that surrounded him, he thought he detected on one (it was that of Richard Lacy) the semblance of a sneering expression. In an instant he was at his ease. He opposed the motion with eloquence, with fervour, with erudition, and with success. The

proposition was rejected by the multitude with acclamation. Young Riordan was declared to have spoken the best speech upon the platform on that day, it was copied in all the newspapers, and even attracted the comments of London editors, it was glanced at by an Irish member in the House of Commons, the speaker became the star of ——— during the season which ensued, and the loadstone and the cynosure of Esther's destiny.

She learned from her nurse the history of the young orator, and heard, with a feeling of unaccountable and almost oppressive pleasure, that the old woman Keleher had cared in like manner for the infancy of both. The connection which this circumstance established between them was slight and fanciful, and yet the idea that both had drawn from the same fountain their first draught of life, had slept in infancy on the same bosom, and shared the same attentions, and the same anxieties, afforded, to the gentle and affectionate

heart of Esther, a pleasure which few could understand or sympathize with. She thought it gave a license for that tender interest which she already began to take in the fortunes of the young patriot. It established a species of relationship which Esther thought entitled him, on her part, to a kind of sisterly regard, and she longed for his friendship.

They became acquainted, and Esther's passion, for such it had already become, was met, and warmly answered. Francis Riordan was still more suddenly enchanted with the beautiful enthusiast than she with him.

A more intimate acquaintance showed Esther many faults in her young hero. She found him shy, proud, and indifferent in general society, though he was all frankness and cheerfulness to her, and her friends. He had fallen into that fatal mistake which is so usual in minds where diffidence is joined with power, the erroneous idea that it was not his business to fit society, but

the business of society to fit him, and that instead of adapting himself to the company in which he happened to be placed, he was entitled to treat it with disrespect and inattention in case it did not suit his own tone of mind. Thus, if it were not for the good sense of the lovely Esther, he would have spent his whole life in wandering through the world in search of a state of society which never did, nor ever will exist, as long as that world shall continue liable to the influence of the passions.

“Francis,” said Esther to him one day, as he lay on the sofa, musing deeply, while she was painting velvet at the window, “will you tell me why you are so silent in company? Why did you not talk last night?”

“I don’t know, Esther. One is not always in spirits.”

“But you never talk so much to me as when you are sorrowful. I have remarked that of you long since.” And while she spoke these child-

ing words, she disarmed them of all power of wounding even the most sensitive feeling, by bending her half shut eyes upon her lover, with a sweet and piercing smile.

“ I can say any thing to you, my Esther. You can understand me, and feel with me. There is a line between our hearts,” he continued affecting to describe it with his finger as he lay. “ Our souls think the same language. There is a sympathy in our existence.”

“ You know me, Francis,” said Esther shaking her head.

“ Have we ever yet found a single word of explanation necessary in all our many discourses? Have my eyes ever spoken in Greek to you, or yours to me in unintelligible Celtic?”

“ Francis, you know me well.”

“ To you I need not say, ‘ Esther, I spoke this in jest’ ‘ that speech was used in irony’ ‘ that allusion was political.’ When I finish a story I do not find your face turned towards me looking

for more, and marring the catastrophe with a ‘Well is that all?’ There is an intelligence between us which I find not in my intercourse with others.”

“ Well, is that all ?”

“ Most impertinent Esther, it is not. I love not to be fretted and disturbed, by an useless collision with people from whom I can learn nothing, and who, nevertheless, can annoy me by their forwardness and pretension.”

“ There you are wrong, Francis, very wrong. There is nobody from whom a man of good sense and good humour may not learn something ; and as to their disturbing you, why should you shun society for them ? If they be silly, laugh away your spleen at their silliness, and if they be impertinent, why you need not be taught your remedy.”

“ I see that even you, Esther, understand the use of the subterfuge.”

“ Nay, if you will say that !” cried Esther, rising hastily and threatening him with one little hand, “ you shall suffer for it. I will tell you what

I think of your silence. You think yourself a genius and you despise your fellow creatures."

Francis raised himself on his elbow, and gazed on her with a look of consciousness and alarm. "If to avoid be to despise," he began, but the lively girl ran towards him, dropped on a little footstool near the sofa and interrupted him with a warning gesture.

"Hold, hold! You must make me no speeches with that serious face. Why do you avoid them, if you hold them in no scorn?"

"I will be candid, Esther. There are many among them that I think hardly worth the pains of pleasing."

"There you are very wrong again, Francis," said Esther with considerable warmth, "you are bound to love them all, the poor and rich, the mean and the noble, the dull, no less than the gifted, the vicious as well as the holy. The dullest man you meet does his utmost to please

you, and you should do as much by him. What book is that near you with the leaf turned down?"

"A volume of Shakespeare."

"And what says that stage playing fellow? Does he not bid you use men better than they deserve, for the lesser their desert the greater is your merit in using them well?"

"On the score of Christianity, Esther, nay on the score of morals, I plead guilty, but I never *set up* for a good Christian you know."

"That's a proper speech. And on the score of patriotism, what say you? You have set yourself up for a patriot, and you have set others down that thwarted you, and you hope to be a great man some day or another. And on the score of your own darling passion, the study of human nature, what say you? This is a kind of anatomy you cannot study without subjects. The more men you know, the more you'll know of their nature."

“ But I have got one subject continually within my reach, and which I can dissect at will:” said Francis, laying his finger over his heart. “ Did Jean Jacques Rosseau—”

“ The wretch, the quack, the hypocrite, the knave, the coward ! You make my blood tingle to my fingers’ ends to hear him named.”

“ Well, well, he knew the heart, however,” said Francis, smiling at her energy, “ and did he find it necessary to expose himself to the dangers of collision with the mob of men ? He laid his own heart bare, and found it a mirror of the whole species. Who knew more of the heart than Massillon ? and yet every body was surprized where a quiet priest could have found such extensive opportunities of observation. But what says D’Alembert to that ? Massillon painted all his splendid gallery of sinners and of saints, his magnificent portrait of the true Christian, his appalling picture of the infidel, his lukewarm devotee, his false penitent, his Mary Mag-

dalen, his sensualist, all from the same original, all from the close study of his own single heart, and yet so true to the life that there breathes no soul in human form that may not find itself reflected in his pages, as in a faultless mirror."

"I read none of your papistical sermons," said Esther, "but friend D'Alembert, and the other eulogists of that French priest have overlooked one circumstance that might have lessened their wonder as to the source of his knowledge."

"And what was that, I pray you?"

"The Confessional."

"Esther," said Francis, after bending his eyes on her for a moment, in silence, "you have struck me dumb."

"You were dumb already. I had rather strike you talkative. If you hope to write a good book, or to be a great orator, you must talk with all, listen with all, and learn

to please all. Put Jean Jacques out of your head. What has all his moping availed him but to win the admiration of all the morbid sentimentalists in Europe? to crown him king of the day dreamers? But that stage-playing fellow near you used his eyes and ears as well as his imagination, and what has been his recompense? Universal empire."

"Hear! hear! hear!"

"Aye," said Esther, laughing, "you thought I had not the gift of speech? Nay, an thou'lt mouth, I'll rant as well as thou, though I am not standing on a papistical platform, with the whole jargon of Holinshed's chronicles in my head, and an ocean of frieze coats and felt hats around me. Ah, Francis, Francis, will you learn to prattle? As I love those eyes, I protest, I feel my heart ache within me when I see you silent in company, and hear that snake-eyed Lacy charming the ears of the whole circle. Ha! Have I hurt you?"

“To the heart,” cried Francis, starting from the sofa, and covering his face with his hand.

“Dear Francis!——”

“Stand away! That viper!” he exclaimed, clenching his hand, and laying it against his forehead. “But we are both young yet.”

“Francis, I am sure you are too wise and too generous to think of old slights, now.”

“Too wise for what, Esther? Too wise to recollect that he has been through all my life my unprovoked and causeless enemy? If I were willing to forget it, he would not suffer me, for he crosses me every day with some new injury. I caught his sneering glance fixed on me at the meeting, though then he served me well. And yet these injuries appear so slight, that I would be ashamed to tell you one, and say it moved my passion. The cold and cautious wretch! After he has stung me by one of those insults which none can understand but he and I, I have

lain in wait (forgive me, heaven!) a whole evening for an opportunity to pay him back again, but he has put me to shame with his cold courtesy and feigned unconsciousness. The fellow has talent, too, and sees through me as if I were a sheet of mica. If we do quarrel, and something tells me it will come to that with us some day or other, you will find that Richard Lacy will win the sympathies of all who hear of the affair, while I shall reap a world of censure and perhaps of obloquy."

The last sentence was uttered in a mournful tone, and the eye of the speaker became fixed on vacancy, as if he were looking forward into an unhappy future. He did not again recover his spirits during the interview, and he took his leave with the air of one who expected some sorrowful adventure.

About this time one of those provincial insurrections broke out, which were usual during the last few centuries, amongst the discontented

peasantry. Arms were taken, contributions levied for ammunition, floggings and cardings inflicted on the part of the insurgents; while the usual preventives were adopted by the local government. The district was proclaimed, and some hundreds of the people were transported, but, strange to say, they still continued discontented.

At this time, too, young Riordan became less frequent in his visits to the Wildermings, and his manner to Esther was more absent and fitful, though not less devoted than before. She observed that he avoided all question of politics, and, if the condition of the peasantry were glanced at in his presence, he grew pale and agitated, and seemed impatient of the subject.

And about this time, likewise, it was, that Richard Lacy, after the usual course of attentions, and without the least ground on which to build his pretensions, made a formal proposal of marriage to Esther Wilderming, which that lady, without ceremony, declined.

Nevertheless a woman finds it hard to hate a man merely for being sensible of her merit. The real misery which Lacy evinced, at his rejection, touched her to the soul, and altered her opinion of his character in a very favourable manner. She saw that he loved her sincerely and disinterestedly, for his fortune and his birth might have entitled him to put forth his claims in circles far more brilliant than that in which they moved at———. She wished that the Rivals might become friends, but this was a desire which it was easier to indulge than to accomplish.

On the All Saints' eve which followed, Esther Wilderming performed, for her amusement and under the instructions of her old nurse, one of those superstitious ceremonies which maidens use to discover their coming destiny in love. In her instance, this was to be decided by the aspect which her lover should wear at their next meeting. If he met her with a smile, happiness

was foreshewn in their union, but if he stood before her with a mournful or an ill-tempered countenance, their lives were doomed to be clouded by many a heavy visitation.

The evening fell calm and sunny, and Esther sat in her mother's drawing-room, dressed in her demure silk habit, and expecting, not without a secret movement of superstitious anxiety, the arrival of her lover.

He had named a particular hour for his visit. It had passed away, and he came not. Another and another rolled away, before Esther heard his foot upon the stairs, and when he came at last, she turned pettishly toward the window, determined to resent a negligence that had of late become rather customary with him.

But there is a preventing intelligence in evil news that has something in it of the supernatural. Her quick ear told her that the very sound of his footstep, on the landing, had something strange and startling, and her heart beat

fearfully when the door handle turned in his grasp. Before she moved in her seat, he was already in the centre of the room. He had entered without removing his cloak, which was gathered close round him; his face was pale and moist, his hair damp and adhering to his forehead, and his eyes filled with an expression of mingled rage, disappointment and perplexity.

“Esther!” he exclaimed, hurrying towards her, and catching her hand in his, “my own, dear Esther! I am come——”

“For what? What ails you, Francis? Why do you tremble? What do you fear?”

“Dear Esther!”

“Speak to me, Francis! I entreat you, speak! My heart will break if you continue silent. Lift up your head and speak!”

“I am ruined, Esther. I am compelled to leave you! I come to press your hand and say ‘Be true to me!’ Years may roll on, and

you shall not see me, the face of the world may be changed before you hear the name of Francis mentioned; oceans shall roar, and mountains rise, between us, but yet be true! I leave the land that we both love so well, and I leave you, Esther, whom I have loved only less than my country. I have striven to serve her, and have failed! That villain, Lacy, has betrayed my secret, and my life is already aimed at. I seek another land and another service, a land where I may yet render service to freedom without incurring the danger of universal ignominy; a land where, if her cause be dangerous, it is at least not shameful. But, Esther, my first love, my heart is with you. Trust in me as you would in the affection of your own mother. It is no praise in me to say, ‘I will be true to you for ever, in life, in sorrow, in trouble, and in death.’ It is no praise, for I could not be otherwise. But you—but you—” he added, trembling violently, while he pressed

one hand upon his brow, and bent downwards in great agitation. "No! no! I will not fear it," said the young man, tossing his head back as if to shake off a depressing fancy. "Esther, remember my last words. Farewell — BE TRUE."

He pressed her for one moment in his arms, kissed her forehead, her lips; her hand, and was about to hurry from the room, when Esther recovered strength sufficient to detain him. Catching his cloak with both her hands, she hung upon him for some moments, panting heavily, and unable to articulate a single word. At length, gradually raising her head and looking upward into his eyes, with a pale and terrified countenance, she murmured, "Francis, what have you done?"

"Dear Esther," he replied "do not stay me now with the question. I am safe, quite safe, if you will let me go; but an hour lost now might be a life lost ere the morning."

In an instant Esther loosed her hold and stood erect before him. "You see," she said, with a painful smile, "a woman's love can be stronger than a woman's will. Run, run! but if you can, as you pass the threshold, tell me in two words what it is you fear so deeply."

"A rebel's death," said Francis quickly, and looking firmly on her at the same time, as if to intimate that he feared not to tell her that with which he would not try the strength of any other woman.

"Two words, indeed, two fearful ones," said Esther, while her face darkened for a moment and then lit up again, "For many a day, I have suspected this. And Lacy has detected and betrayed you? Ah, the cold knave!"

"Be true to me!"

"Indeed, Francis, I will. You are taking my happiness with you wherever you go, and I think my country would no longer be my country if you should leave it. Oh, heaven, oh,

heaven! And you are sure that Richard has betrayed you?"

"Do you start a kind doubt for him then?" said Francis, with some little impatience.

"You know, Francis, he is now the King's officer. Does he not hold a commission of the peace?"

"War, blight, and sickness light on him! he does—" exclaimed Francis, bursting out into an uncontrollable passion, "I could wish all the curses of Caliban upon him—but they are old men's weapons. Well, peace! our days are yet not numbered. We may meet yet."

"May heaven forbid it, while your hearts are thus disposed!" said Esther, in a tone of mingled reproach and tenderness. "But farewell, Francis," she added, extending one hand towards him, while she pressed the other hard upon her eyes—"I will not stay you now, you know my heart goes with you."

"Hark!"

“What hear you?”

“I heard”—said Francis, standing motionless and elevating his hand, as if in the act of listening intently,—“I heard a dead-bell ringing in the air. Again, again! Do you not hear it, Esther?”

Esther heard nothing, but at that moment the recollection of the prophetic rite which she had performed flashed upon her mind, and made the blood run backward upon her heart. At the same instant, likewise, a heavy cloud which overhung the disk of the declining sun fell downward like a veil, before the dazzling orb, and caused an instantaneous twilight. To the eyes of Esther, whose imagination had been excited by the rite, and by the agitating nature of the scene which had just taken place, it seemed, at that moment, as if the face of her lover grew black, and scowled upon her. The darkness did not diminish during the remainder of their interview, which was very brief;

and the weight was not removed from Esther's spirits. The circumstances just detailed, though purely accidental in themselves, took a deep hold of her imagination, and associated with the recollection of that parting a feeling of intense solemnity and gloom.

On that night, Richard Lacy was found severely wounded on a mountain side at Drumgoff, between Roundwood and Glendalough, or the Valley of the Seven Churches. He had been hurt he said, in a duel, by Francis Riordan; but there were many who imagined that there was more generosity, than rigid truth, in this account of the transaction. Esther did not think so, but she pitied Lacy, and she pitied him still more, when she discovered, or received good reason to believe, that Francis was wholly in error in his suspicion of Lacy's treachery.

Francis was one of those unhappy young men who were kidnapped into the South American service by the scandalous devices of the

agents of that government in those islands. His first letters to Esther showed that he had participated in the fatigues, the privations, the disappointments and the heart-sicknesses of that legion of unfortunates, whose miserable fate is still spoken of with feelings of undiminished indignation by many a childless parent in their native land. At length, the tidings came that Francis had paid, within the tropics, that debt to loyalty which he had refused to render in the island of his birth.

And now, years had gone by, and Esther's parents were in their grave, and Esther herself, all changed in heart and frame, was living under the guardianship of her maternal uncle Damer, in his wild and lonely residence of Glendearg. The assiduities of Richard Lacy, joined to the recollection of her mother's dying wishes, together with a feeling of gratitude for many services which he had rendered to her friends, and, assisted by the importunities of the Damers, prevailed on Esther

to give her consent to a marriage in which however her affections had little interest. She liked her present suitor better than before, and she endeavoured to persuade herself that it was possible she might love him, but her nature was bereaved of the power ; her breast was empty ; her heart was buried in the grave of her first love.

CHAPTER III.

ABOUT midnight, Mr. Damer, a low sized, sleek, smooth-featured, elderly gentleman, was seated in the dining room of his own house, in a certain hilly and heathy county in the neighbourhood of Dublin. Before him, on a rose-wood table, varnished like the surface of a mirror, stood decanters of cote roti and hermitage, the contents of which appeared to have been brought somewhat low in the course of the evening. The chair in which he sat was one of those splendid

inventions by which the character of our age has been immortalized, and which will enable us to divide the admiration of posterity with the founders of the Parthenon and the constructors of the Babylonian gardens. It was one of those elastic cushions for which, not the tenants of the air, but the air itself, has been laid under tribute. The magnificently gilded covers of a quarto edition of Henry's Bible lay on his right hand, reflecting the light of four wax candles, which were supported in candlesticks of massive silver, richly carved. A solid and elegant side-board was loaded with all the splendours of the family plate and glass. On a secretaire, at a little distance from the table, were placed a quantity of books in plain dark binding, and stamped on the covers with the impress of the Society for the diffusion of Christian Knowledge. In a corner, less brilliantly illumined, the eye of the curious observer might detect a parcel of small pamphlets, stitched in blue covers, and

bearing on their title pages the various denominations of "The Dairyman's Daughter," "The Conversion of Timothy Delany from the errors of the Church of Rome," "The Lough Derg Pilgrim, a Tale," "Father Clement, a Roman Catholic story," and many other productions of a similar tendency.

There was something in the air of the whole apartment that was calculated to impress the beholder with an instantaneous conviction of the wealth, the self-contentedness, and the piety of the owner. It had little of mere fashion, but a great deal of that species of luxury which in England is denominated comfort, and in Ireland, falls little short of magnificence. The person of the proprietor was entirely in character, or, in the cant of connoisseurs, in *keeping* with his possessions. His hair was short and sleek, his head round as a bullet, his face plump and peachy, his eyes meek and sanctimonious, with a little spark of earthly fire, (the result of some harm-

less and habitual self-indulgence) gleaming unsteadily through the pupil, like the *pæta* of the Venus Erycina. His legs, shining in black silk, were crossed, so as to expose the calf to the influence of a cheerful coal-fire, and a bunch of fine gold seals reposed on an incipient paunch. No collar, starched and impudent, obscured the blushing rotundity of his beardless jaws; a muslin cravat, of the purest white, alone encircled his short neck, for he had the good taste to sit in full dress to his wine. Thus cushioned on the zephyrs, not in the poetical, but the practical, sense of the phrase, sipping his *cote roti*, and glancing occasionally, while the conversation proceeded, at the columns of a Dublin daily paper, sat Mr. Kirwan Damer, the owner of this mansion, and of the adjoining estate of Glendearg, in the county above intimated.

To heighten the domestic picture, in a ounger, on the opposite side of the fire-place, sat Mrs. Damer, as well conditioned as her husband, dressed like him in black, with a trim cap of

white muslin, surrounding her fair and full and rather languid countenance. The lady too was reading.

But that we have already suffered the names to escape us, the reader might suppose that we were describing a wealthy rector, and his help-mate, in their handsome parlour at the Glebe.* He would be however totally in error. Mr. Damer was merely an Irish country gentleman of our own time. The Flath has vanished, the Canfinny is forgotten, the Chiefs of their race are no more regarded, the duellist, the drunkard, the libertine and the gambler, have all been exiled from the pale of Irish society, or compelled to wear their vices in a veil. A class of men has succeeded to which even those who have an in-

* Sir John Davis pleads hard for the incumbents of his own time, and urges the propriety of giving them the land of the Erenachs, when the statute of chauntries should come into force in Ireland. "Albeit" he writes to the Earl of Salisbury, "there be in every parish a parson and vicar, yet both their livings together are not sufficient *for one honest man.*" In this particular at least, Ireland has improved, for even a rogue might contrive to live well upon a vicarage in our own day.

terest in its vilification must accord a preference. Those who wish to know the character of that class should know the Damers.

On the other side of the table, near Mrs. Damer, sat a gentleman of a manner and appearance very different from that of Mr. Damer. He was tall and well proportioned, dressed very plainly, with a red, laughing countenance, and two large black eyes which seemed to be always rambling in search of amusement.

“ Well, Damer,” said Mr. Leonard, the gentleman just described, “ I totally disagree with you, in every one of your plans. I think you will do no service whatever to the peasantry, I think you do not understand them sufficiently. [Mr. Damer smiled.] I think though they are ignorant and naked (poor fellows !) and Papists to boot, they have as fair a chance of going to heaven as the best of ourselves ; that is my idea, poor devils : even though they do break out now and then, human nature is human nature, and my

idea is that all the funds and subscriptions in the world will not get half a dozen more souls into heaven than were on their way before. Half a dozen is the outside."

"And would not the salvation of one," said Mr. Damer, lifting the cote roti to his lips, "be worth the whole cost, and all the exertions of the Society together?"

"Be worth sixty thousand a year?"

"Sixty million!"

"Besides the bickerings and heartburnings that have broken up the frame of society in our country, the division of families, the sundering of early attachments, the fomentation of civil disunion and the diffusion of all uncharitableness in private life? My idea is, that for the one soul we save by this business, we lose fifty."

"For shame, Tom," said Mrs. Damer, "you are growing worse and worse every day."

"I don't pretend to any great sanctity," said Leonard. "You, my fair and fat and sanctimoni-

ous sister, know me a long time, and know me to be a blunt plain fellow, that thinks he does his duty when he takes care of his neighbour's body, and leaves his soul between him and his Creator. There is the difference between us. Damer is as honest a fellow as any body, but his charity all evaporates in smoke. If I find a poor fellow starving on my estate, why, (heaven forgive me!) I think I do my duty when I send him a leg of mutton, and make him an abatement, while Damer smothers him with books and Bibles and I don't know what. Here's my idea. Give the people bread, and they'll find out piety themselves ; make them prosperous and you may be sure they will grow virtuous without much labour. But hunger and cold are the sorriest Martexts in the world."

"As to want of charity," said Mr. Damer, "one circumstance may show you on what side that is to be found. You remember last Sunday, my love?"

Mrs. Damer raised her hands and eyes with an air of gentle horror.

“We were going to church,” continued Damer, “in an open carriage, when we met the Archbishop’s family on their return from Cove, within a few perches of the Romish chapel. The people were all assembled, waiting for mass, outside the chapel door, with their eyes fixed on the two carriages. You know it is my misfortune to be very easily confused by any circumstance that places me in a conspicuous situation; and it happened, at this moment, that I was in the act of speaking to the ladies, when a young ragged scoundrel, amongst the crowd, set them all in a roar of laughter, by shouting out some Irish words. What was that expression, my dear?”

“Bawgoon thae heeña, my love.”

“Yes, bawgoon thae heeña, meaning ‘Bacon-on-Friday,’ a sobriquet which the benighted and ungrateful scoundrels have con-

ferred, on the converts whom we have withdrawn from amongst them, and in return for all my exertions for their welfare. I don't wonder you should laugh. Bacon-on-Friday, indeed! I never was more ashamed in my life. I'm not astonished you should laugh. Take your wine, sir."

"Bawgoon thae heeña!" cried Leonard, in a convulsion of laughter, "Oh, the young villain!"

"Take your wine, sir."

"Bawgoon thae heeña!"

"You need'nt repeat it so often, Leonard, however."

"Oh, the young scoundrel. And what did the ladies say?"

"They could'nt help laughing when they understood what the expression meant."

"The villain! Bawgoon thae heeña!"

"Come, come, Leonard, take your wine, and have done with it."

“ Well, I will. Poor fellows ! They will have their joke to the last.”

“ The benighted creatures ! ”

“ Ah, now, come, Damer, keep your cant for the preachers, and talk like a man. It is very easy for you and me to sit down by our coal fires, and groan over the sins and ignorance of the poor, starving, shivering cottagers, while we drink our champaign and hermitage ; but, heaven forgive us, I’m afraid that we’ll fare otherwise in the other world, for all our hypocrisy, while these poor devils will be reading the Bible in paradise.”

“ Fie, fie, Leonard, you grow more profane.”

“ Do you know what John Wesley said ? ”

“ Any thing that escaped the lips of that saint must be comfortable.”

“ Very well. He said it was impossible for a Christian to expect to ride in a coach on earth, and go to heaven afterwards. Pick comfort out of that if you can.”

“The road to Heaven, my dear brother,” said Mrs. Damer—

“Is a straight and a narrow one, my darling. No thoroughfare for coaches. Ah, what nonsense! You and I live in such houses as this, and rail at the poor peasantry in their cottages. We censure their intemperance, while we sip our *maraschino*; we shudder at their turbulence, while we loll in a coach on our elastic cushions. We shut the gate of heaven against those who tread their way thither amongst thorns and affliction, and we dream that it will be open to ourselves, after we have sighed, and moaned, and prayed, and believed our way through all the sensual indulgences of earth, and stand on the portals of the other world, like prize-Christians, ready fattened for the celestial market.”

“Profane, profane!”

“Oh, Tom!”

“Oh, Nelly! I had rather be profane

than hypocritical, that's my idea. Ah, it is an easy matter to be a saint, when one has an income of four thousand a year, with a mansion like this on one's estate. It is easy to sing psalms when you have them sent down with the newest music from Clementi, or Goulding and D'Almaine, and can sing them to one of Broadwood's best grand pianos with all the additional keys, or a triple action pedal harp. It is easy to pray out of a pair of richly-gilt Morocco covers, in a handsome pew, with silk cushions under one's knees, and the thermometer at summer heat. It is not difficult to be punctual at church, in defiance of distance and of weather, when one can go there in a close carriage and four; nor to meet round the fire at evening and read the Bible, and shudder at the poor deluded peasant, who is shivering, meanwhile, all alone, by his cold cottage hearth, and offering up the idolatrous devotion that moves our horror. But the great Lord of

nature has his eye upon us, and upon that peasant at the same moment. He weighs his sufferings and his temptations against his errors. He sees his agonies, he hears his sighs, and he looks upon the tears of his children. And He sees our luxury, our self-sufficiency and our presumption. Heaven save us from the sin of the Pharisee ! The poor—poor peasant that works from dawn to dusk for eight-pence, in cold and heat, in shower and sunshine, to share that eight-pence with the whole population of his little cabin, while you and I sit here by our fire-side and judge him over our wine ! Well, well ! ” continued the speaker, elevating his hands and shaking them above his head, “ I hope we’ll all be saved, one time or another ; come, fill your glass, and let us talk of something else.”

“ Talk on, talk on, you began by saying that you disapproved of all my plans,” said Mr. Damer, with the calm and complacent smile of

one who listens good-humouredly and half-amused to suggestions which he has no idea of condescending to adopt.

“ True, true. Well, about this marriage. I think, (you know I always tell my mind freely,) I think you are going to sacrifice your ward.”

“ Oh, Tom ! ”

“ Oh, Nelly ! I do not like that Lacy ; that black-browed, pale-cheeked and ambitious plotter. I think you would have done much more wisely if you had wedded her some years ago to poor young Riordan. That’s my idea.”

“ The dissolute young villain ! ” exclaimed Damer, appearing for the first time to be really moved by the observations of his brother-in-law. “ On this subject, only, I will take the liberty of echoing your own words. Fill your glass, and let us talk of something else.”

“ Poor Riordan ! He was a manly, fine young fellow, and worth five hundred such after-dinner martinets as Richard Lacy. My good

wishes will always follow him wherever he goes. He had all the firmness and ready thought of five and twenty before he was eighteen."

"And all that firmness and promptitude did but enable him to abuse the confidence of friends, to pour the poison of disobedience into the heart of a gentle and innocent girl, to quarrel with his own family, and to quit his country as an adventurer."

"As a patriot, if you please. An adventurer in the cause of Columbia, the cause of freedom."

"The cause of green feathers and epaulettes. If he be dead, as rumour tells us he is, let us say nothing more, nor better, of him than that he lived for love, and died for a green jacket."

"Dead or alive, let joy be with him in his exile. Ah, Damer, Damer, you should have married him to little Esther, and kept him at home in Wicklow."

“ He is better where he is,” returned Damer.
“ He is better in his grave ; he lived long enough for his friends and for himself. What good could be looked for at the hands of a baffled murderer ? ”

“ A murderer ! ”

“ A baffled one, I said ; yes, he had the atrocity to make an attempt upon the life of Lacy with his own hand.”

“ Poh, I know what you allude to. And do you believe that story ? ”

“ It did not want proof.”

“ I would’nt hang a dog upon such evidence. It was a duel, man. It happened merely to be an honest one, fought in hot blood and without waiting for seconds. Does Lacy dare to say that it was otherwise ? ”

“ No, no ; Lacy is a man of honour, and he has always acquitted Riordan ; but the circumstances speak for themselves. Lacy found bleeding on the mountain side, near Drumgoff,

and Riordan absconding, as soon as he had placed him in the surgeon's hands. The case was too plain. Even the very peasantry regarded that unhappy young man as one marked out for a life of unchanging woe and gloom. They said he had been overlooked in his infancy."

"How overlooked?"

"I will find you a better interpreter than myself, for the phrase. Mrs. Keleher, who was Riordan's nurse, as well as Esther's, is at present living with me, in the capacity of house-keeper, and she will explain it to you in her own admirable idiom."

Mr. Damer rang for a servant, and sent him to find Mrs. Keleher. In a few minutes afterwards, the jingling of keys, and the sound of a heavy foot, in carpet-shoes, announced the approach of this respected functionary.

"The people are surprised" said Damer, "that we should be so bigotted, and yet con-

tinue to be pleased with a papistical house-keeper. But they know little of us. Let the hour be far from Glendearg, when religion shall teach us to forget our old affections, to look cold upon a soul that heaven has made, and call it piety. If we meet a blind man, Tom, we must take him by the arm, and guide and pity, not revile or hate him."

"There's some honesty in that speech," said Leonard, "and I would shake hands with you for it, but that it was spoken by the claret and not by you. Here's my idea. A papist—"

"Hush! Mrs. Keleher is at the door."

CHAPTER IV.

THE old housekeeper had been heard slowly ascending the stairs, step by step, like Dante on the mountain,

— the hinder foot still firmer ;

and made her appearance almost before the last sentence had been concluded. She had that well-conditioned rotundity of figure, and respectable neatness of attire, which are usual in her situation. Her face, though the foot-print of the raven was about her eyes, had that character of

“youth in the heart” which some happy beings can preserve unaltered amid the decay of youthful passions and the loss of early friends; and yet this was blended with an expression of affectionate sadness in the old woman’s eyes. The length of her countenance, the blackness of her hair and eyes, and the shade of deep olive in her complexion, showed her to be a native of the south-western coasts, where the external peculiarities of the ancient Spanish colonists are still preserved in a remarkable degree. A large rosary of horn beads, with an old shilling instead of a cross, hung conspicuously on the same string as her multitude of keys, serving at the same time as a symbol of her religious independence toward her patrons, and a testimony in the eyes of her country friends, of her honest adherence to the faith of her ancient village.

“Mrs. Keleher,” said her master, “I sent for you to know whether you remember Mr. Riordan, of Roundwood?”

“ Mr. Francis Riordan, that went out with the paythriots?”

“ The same.”

The old woman shook her head with a sad smile.

“ Remember Francis Riordan?” she repeated. “ Is it remember the child I nurst in my own arms? You might as well ask me if I remember my own, or if I recollect Miss Esther, above, herself, for sure it’s the same call I have to both. Indeed I do remember him well and dearly. Soft be his rest in heaven this night, I pray. He lived and died an honour to his people.”

“ I know what you mean by that,” said Mr. Damer. “ He died with a green feather in his cap, and a green sash around his waist, and you are old enough to remember troubled days. There is the secret of your admiration, Mrs. Keleher.”

Another smile, of a different character, and

apparently half suppressed, crossed the features of the old nurse.

“He was admired, master, by more than one; by those that were young enough to feel his merit, and too young to recollect the troubled days you talk of.”

Mr. Damer would have frowned at this speech, but that his forehead was too fat, and the corrugator muscles too long unused to action. He turned away his head, and sipped his wine.

“He was worthy of it, whatever love he met,” continued Mrs. Keleher. “He had a warm heart in his breast, he had the eye of a hawk, and the tongue of an angel in his head. If he burned my house, and then asked me to take him in my old arms, I’d do it. He had ever and always a kind of mournful look in his eyes, and a tone in his voice that would coax Europe. He’s dead, they tell me, now, and buried far away from home. It is the course of nature, that the living should forget the dead,

and do their duty by each other. Poor Master Francis met but little love or kindness while he was able to return it ; and who can warm to him now, when his own heart is cold ?”

“ What was the cause of his being so unfortunate, Mrs. Keleher ?” exclaimed Leonard, who was impatient to bring the old lady to the point.

“ The poor lad was overlooked, when he was a child.”

“ Overlooked ? How was that ?”

“ I’ll tell you, sir. There are some people that have an eye in their head that it is not good for ’em to look upon any thing, and if it so happened that they’d look upon a child, as it were, or a cow, or a horse, or a ha’p’orth at all, and to say, ‘ That’s a fine child,’ or, ‘ That’s a fine cow,’ without saying ‘ God bless it,’ after, the child would be so far overlooked, and never would see a day’s luck from that to his death’s hour.”

“ And who overlooked young Riordan ?”

“ There’s the question, sir. Who did it ?

I had him in my arms of an evenin' at the doore, abroad, an' I singin' for myself, an' dandlin' the little darling up an' down, an' he crowin' an' laughin' greatly. It was a fine calm evenin', an' the lake as smooth as a looking glass, when I seen a woman reelin' a hank o' thread, and goin' by the doore an' fixin' an eye upon mas-ther Francis. 'That's a fine child,' says she, 'you have in your arms.' Well, hardly she said the word, when I heard the kettle boilin' over within upon the fire, an' I run in to take it up, without even waitin' to make the woman say 'God bless it!' an' 'm sure, when I come out again to call afther her, there was no account to be had o' the lady, high or low."

"And so the child was overlooked?" said Mr. Leonard.

"The child was overlooked," returned the housekeeper: "an' I don't know was it fauky o' me, but from that hour I thought I saw the same mournful look in his eyes that he had till

the day he parted me. I never seen two (an' sure I ought to know 'em, afther nursin' the both of 'em) I never seen two that were so unlike in themselves, an' loved so dearly as himself an' the young darlin' above stairs, Miss Esther."

"Come, come," said Mr. Damer, with a warning voice.

"Oh, 'tis no thraison what I say, sure, when 'tis among ourselves," continued the old woman. "I said, before, they loved as I never seen man and woman love, an' still they were as conthrairy in their ways as two could be. Miss Esther, though bein' of a methodish family, (forgive us all our sins!) was the merriest child I think I ever laid my two eyes on, just as she was always, an' as she is this day, heart-broken as she is."

"What!"

"With the sickness, I mean; with the dint o' the delicacy, inwardly, sure, I said already it

is the coorse o' nature for the living to forget the dead, an' I wish no man happier than Richard Lacy, now that the turf is green above my own poor lad. She was ever an' always laughin' an' jokin' poor Masther Frank about his sorrowful ways. An' still she had great feelin's, the craither ! She cried a power when she heerd of his death."

"How did she spend this evening?" asked Mrs. Damer.

"The same as the day, then, ma'am, between laughin' (though there was only a little o' that indeed) an' shiverin', an' faintin', as it were, but sure you were with her yourself, ma'am. She had no fit since you saw her. Ah, Masther, take it from me, she never had the same heart from the day that Masther Francis flitted."

"An' tell me now, Mrs. Keleher," said Leonard, in a loud voice, "how came you to nurse Miss Wilderming?"

"How come I to nurse her? Why then,

I'll tell you that. To be goin' I was, through the village of Roundwood of a time, very soon afther I berrin' my first child, an' I called in to a friend in the place, a lone woman that kep a little shop o' medicines. 'T is where she was when I called, was with Mrs. Wilderming, the methodish Lady, and she told me when she came in that there was a place for me as nurse, if I choose to take it, in the town. Faix, never say it again, says I, I'm sure I will so, an' glad to get it. So I got the child the next morning, and brought her with me to the same place where I nursed Masther Francis, where my husband's people were buried, an' where I laid his own old bones when it was the will of heaven to part us."

"Well, Mrs. Keleher, will you go up stairs, and tell Miss Esther, that her uncle wishes to speak to her before she goes to rest? He wishes her to sign a little paper, while her uncle Leonard is here to witness it."

The old woman replied to this speech with a significant look and a shake of the head, after which she turned on her heel, and hobbled towards the room-door."

"And Misther Lacy, Ma'am, will I send him in-to you?"

"He will find out the way himself, I dare say," returned Mrs. Damer, "but you may bid Aaron go and seek him."

Mrs. Keleher departed; and Mr. Damer, throwing open a rose-wood desk, displayed a document purporting to contain the articles of marriage between Richard Lacy, Esq., of Roundwood, and Esther Wilderming, of Glendearg, niece and ward of the comfortable looking gentleman who was now so busy on her behalf.

"Don't move the candles, my love," said Mrs. Damer, "there is light enough. Let there be as little form as possible, or you will terrify the poor little timid thing out of her wits."

“Nevertheless, Nell,” said her husband, with a smile, “you stood in a very good light yourself, the day you and I set our hands and seals to the same sort of parchment.”

“Ah, my love, the case was very different. You were my chosen and my only one.”

Mr. Damer would have kissed his wife, for this speech, but that the connubial action was prevented by the opening of the door, and the entrance of Mr. Richard Lacy.

He was a low sized man, with a lean, hard and bloodless face, eyes full opened, and cold in their expression, hair thrown back on all sides, so as to conceal no part of a countenance whose extent could not admit of much retrenchment; hands little, yellow and bony; lips, thin and envious in their character, and a manner that, while it showed a perfect intimacy with good society, was yet too artificial to deserve the praise of elegance.

He glanced at the open desk, and his

appearance, while he took his seat near Mrs. Damer, was not free from agitation. Leonard gazed at him with an unliking eye. He whispered something, in a low and broken voice, about the troubled look of the sky, and then, fixing his eyes upon the doorway, seemed to watch for the entrance of the fair ward with the eye of a real lover.

CHAPTER V.

THIS night had been appointed for the formal signing of the marriage articles. The witnesses, as we have said were ready, the desk was thrown open, the candles were moved to a suitable distance, and every eye was bent upon the parlour door. It opened at length, and a figure entered very unlike that of the lovely sectarian for whose approach the eyes of Lacy longed as for the light. It was that

of a tall, muscular, middle aged man, dressed in a brown suit, with grizzled hair brushed sleekly upon his brow, a face, of a deep yellow tinge, sown thick with freckles, and eyes which had a curious mixture of active thought and of solemnity in their expression.

“Well, Aaron,” said Mr. Damer, “what of your mistress?”

“She is not coming,” said the servant. “She wishes to speak with you in the drawing room.”

“With me?” asked Lacy, starting from his chair.

Aaron replied to this question by a stare of calm surprize, and then stalked after Mr. Damer out of the parlour.

That gentleman found his niece standing in a niche formed by one of the lower windows, with a white veil drawn round her person, her arms folded, with one hand laid upon her throat, and her person as motionless

as a statue. The window curtains were drawn back, and the thin moonlight, falling on her pale face and light grey drapery, gave something of a spiritual expression to the whole figure.

“ Well, Esther, pet, why do you keep us waiting ? ” said Damer, patting his niece affectionately on the shoulder, “ Richard is below this hour.”

“ Uncle,” replied Esther, making an effort at her usual liveliness of manner, “ you must read the Bible, and learn to bear with me. My valour is oozing out at my finger ends, as the time approaches, and I fear you will find me out to be an arrant coward before long.”

“ Fie, fie ! you are trembling.”

“ Have you discovered it ? Nay then, take the honest truth at once, uncle, my heart is failing me.”

“ What should you fear ? ”

“ I have enough, I think, to make a maiden’s heart beat rapidly, sir. I fear, first, a room full of staring guests——”

“ But there are none——” said Damer, interrupting her.

“ A pair of wax candles, shining in one’s eyes, and lighting one up like a player, an open desk, a scroll of parchment, and the eyes of a doubting bridegroom.”

“ You are a strange girl.”

“ You have named my name, as sure as there is a moon in heaven. Adam himself could have done no better. But, indeed, indeed, uncle,” she continued, suddenly assuming a deep and serious tone, and lifting her hands towards him, as if in the act of supplication, “ my mind is changing on this marriage.”

“ Changing, Esther?”

“ Changing,” echoed the beautiful girl, with a musing look, while she tossed her head significantly several times. “ Every thing around

me, every sight, every sound, seems to warn me against it. My dreams are full of threats and warning terrors. I cannot tell you why, but I feel as if this marriage were to bring on some terrible misfortune."

"Oh, Esther, fie! This is trifling with us all," said Damer, with some impatience.

Esther bent down her head to hide the burst of tears which flowed from her at this speech. "Trifling?" she repeated, "may the friends of Esther never know such mirth! Uncle, I am very ill; I am growing worse and worse every hour. I don't know what is the matter, but I feel as if I had some dreadful fortune hanging over me. I fear I have not long to live."

Mr. Damer became quite fretted at what he thought the hypochondriasm of this speech, and reproved his niece with considerable warmth. "While there was any reasonable ground for your holding back," he said "while there was any hope that your own early wishes might be

realized, I never once pressed you upon this point. Did I ever for an instant put you to pain on the behalf of Lacy, while the promotion of his interests could have injured those of any other person ? ”

“ Indeed, uncle Damer, you never did.”

“ And is there any thing, then, so very unreasonable in my now entreating that you would no longer delay the fulfilment of a promise freely made ? ”

“ You are always kind and good.”

“ Besides,” continued Mr. Damer, “ I hope my Esther will be generous enough to remember that there are others whose feelings are not less intimately affected by this negociation than her own. You would not put poor Lacy to the agony of such a disappointment, after so many years of steady faith and constancy ? ”

Esther remained for a few moments silent, with her face buried between her hands, and then raising her person and making an effort to appear

determined, she placed her arm within that of Mr. Damer. It is well, thought that gentleman within his own mind; the usual maidenly prologue is concluded, and we may shortly hope to have the play begin.

He led her, still trembling, from the room. They reached the hall, upon which the door of the dining room opened. Here the courage of Esther once more failed her. Her uncle felt her hang more heavily upon his arm, and her breath came thick and short, as if she were threatened with some hysterical affection. At that instant, the door opened, and Mrs. Damer made her appearance. The rigid character of this lady had always impressed her niece with a certain degree of awe, and that sentiment came now most opportunely to check the deep emotion which already began to agitate her limbs, and features. Supported, at either side, by her relatives, she once more summoned resolution enough to approach the dreaded door, when some sudden

and new occasion made her start and turn her head in the attitude of one who listens intently.

“Who said that?” she asked, in a hurried whisper.

“That?—what, Esther?” enquired her uncle.

“Somebody spoke behind me, somebody said ‘Be true!’ Did you not hear? *I* did, as plainly as I hear my own voice now.”

“It could not be, my love,” said Mrs. Damer, “the doors are all closed, and the hall is empty.”

“I heard the words,” repeated Esther, panting heavily “as plainly as I heard you now. Oh, heaven, support me!”

“Fie, Esther, fie!”

“I have no choice!” continued Esther, looking upward fixedly, and seeming to address her speech to heaven. “If you hear and see and blame me, Francis, remember what I suffered for your sake. I do it for the best. O, my good guardian, look on me to night! If, in this step I

am about to take, I act at all from selfish or unworthy motives ; if my heart be false ; if I seek my own good in any thing I do to night, I do not ask thee to hold up thine arm ! I do not shun the anger that is gathering on my destiny ! But my heart is silent. My heart accuses me of nothing evil in my intention, and I fear not your displeasure since you know it is my duty and not my will that draws me to this sacrifice."

Somewhat strengthened and relieved by this appeal, Esther proceeded with her friends to the parlour, and made her appearance there with less of confusion than she had anticipated. She gave her hand, with that cordial understanding which connects good natured hearts together, to Mr. Leonard, bent her head slightly, and with as much kindness as she could assume, to Lacy, and then moved quickly to the desk on which the marriage articles were laid.

The agitation of the bridegroom while Esther took the pen, and prepared with a trembling hand

to affix her name to the document, was scarcely less remarkable than her own. His conduct was that of one who is upon the brink of some intense and long sought happiness, and who fears that some sudden chance may yet interpose to snatch the blessing from within his reach, even when he has already opened his arms for its reception. But Esther, suffering Mr. Damer to guide her hand, had already made the dreaded sign which bound their destinies together, and his was safe from henceforth. He ceased to tremble, and Leonard, who watched him with the eye of one but little enamoured of his character, observed a flash of ecstasy, that almost approached a degree of triumph break from his eyes, when all the necessary signatures had been affixed to this legal document.

Without much conversation, the company separated, after the business for which they had assembled had been discharged. The following day was appointed for the marriage which was

intended to be as private as possible. The gentlemen left the house, and, soon after their departure, Esther was borne to her room in an alarming state of weakness. Tremblings and fits of syncope succeeded, and kept the family during the remainder of the night in a state of intense anxiety and agitation.

CHAPTER VI.

AARON, the servant already mentioned, was in the act of crossing the hall, after making an anxious enquiry into the condition of his beloved young mistress, and receiving for the first time the satisfactory intelligence that she had fallen into a deep, and apparently refreshing, sleep.

“ Poor craither ! ” he said, “ poor darlin’ ! the light will lave my eyes if you get no better in the mornin’ ! Well, friend Davy,” he added,

addressing a handsome countryman who just then made his appearance in the passage leading to the servants' hall. "Where are you going, now?"

"To Glendalough, Misther Aarum," returned the stranger, gathering around him the folds of his large frieze coat. "How's the missiz?"

"Thank you, finely. You must'nt stir yet?"

"Oh, that I might'nt if I can stop a minute, 'tis a'most one, an' I have a long road before me."

"You must come back, and take a little nourishment again' the way. Take off your coat and come."

With some decent persuasion, Davy Lenigan, ("for that was his name," as the old story-books have it,) was prevailed upon to return and take his seat by the blazing fire in the servants' hall. It was a comfortable apartment, floored with brick, with a deal table extending nearly

the whole length, and flanked by two forms of the same material. A pair of arm-chairs, intended as seats of honour for the coachman and the cook, were placed on each side the fire, and, those respected functionaries being now absent, Davy Lenigan was invited to take possession of that position which was usually occupied by the Phaeton of Glendearg.

Here he sat for some moments, while old Aaron hurried out of the room, to procure materials for whiskey punch, which was what he meant to intimate by the word "nourishment."

"Ah, Mrs. Keleher," said Davy, observing the nurse making some arrangements at the end of the room, "so this is the way old times are forgotten above stairs!"

"Ah, howl your tongue now, Davy," said the old woman, "there's *raison* in all things."

"Ah," continued Davy, with a sad countenance, "its little Misther Riordan, my poor

young masther, ever thought she'd turn on him that way in his grave."

"E' howl your tongue, now, Davy."

"Oh, Masther Francis, they had'nt my heart in their buzzom when they forgot you that way, an' the colour you wore the day you died. Only four years gone, what four? 'tis'nt, nor passin' three an' a half, an' there she is goin' to put the very decaiver in your place that was the cause o' your desthruccion an' your banishment! The very decaiver! 'm sure I hard him myself, the day he parted her, talkin' an' he havin' her hand betune the two of his, an' he sayin' his last word, 'Be thrue!' Look, Mrs. Keleher, there's no use in talkin', but it would kill the Danes to hear him sayin' that word, that day! An' now to think of her marryin' another man, an' takin' to Lacy of all the world! Dear knows, my heart is broke from the thoughts of it. An' sure what hurt

if it was for one of his own *profession** he suffered, but for a methodish ! Ah, dear, dear, dear ! ”

“ Howl, again Davy ; Aaron will hear you.”

“ Ayeh, let me alone. Let ’em all rise out of it, for love, afther that. An’ tis’nt that, but the talk she used to have herself, about the counthry, an’ the boys ! Ah, Masther Frank ! Masther Frank ! Dear knows I would’nt wonder if he showed himself to her of a night on the ’count of it.”

“ Eyeh ! ” Mrs. Keleher exclaimed with a faint shriek.

“ Dear knows, I would’nt. Three year an’ a half ! Sure it takes seven years to make a man dead in law, an’ it seems there’s only half the time wantin’ to make him dead in love.”

“ Well, well, achree, the dead is dead, an’ the livin’ is livin’, let us take care of ourselves

* Religion.

an not to be jedgin' any one. Howl your tongue, now, here's Aaron comin'."

Davy complied, with a kind of groan, and in a few minutes, he and the elderly sectarian were seated alone, by the fire-side, with a capacious jug of whiskey punch steaming luxuriously between them.

In addition to the feeling of honest hospitality, Aaron Shepherd had a motive for detaining Davy. It had been the old methodist's misfortune, during his time of service with Esther's father, to hear one of those controversial argumentations by which the mind of Ireland, and of England also, was agitated about this period. The consequence of this circumstance was, that Aaron was presently seized with an irresistible passion for polemics, and dreamed of nothing less than making converts on his own account. He had long since cast a hungry eye upon Davy, and longed for a good opportunity of awaking him

to a sense of his condition. In this, however, it was necessary to employ some skill, for Davy was as wary as a plover, and being conscious of his own want of theological information, while he was fully determined not to be convinced by any thing Aaron could urge, he avoided all occasion of controversy with that person. Yet he could not altogether decline a plain challenge, for Davy had a brother who was an instructor of youth; he kept a school at Glendalough, where young people of both sexes were instructed in the arts of reading, writing, grammar, book-keeping, arithmetic, &c. at the cheap rate of half a crown a quarter, while those who aspired to classical information, in which also Mr. Henry Lenigan was capable of affording some rudimental information, paid the enormous sum of two guineas a year. He passed in his neighbourhood for a man of "great manners," his literary education having taught him to assume

a certain suavity of bearing, and occasionally a certain euphuism of discourse which impressed his neighbours with a high idea of his erudition. Nothing astonished Aaron more than that an argument which appeared to himself as convincing as a self-evident proposition, should produce so little effect on Davy, while the latter felt no difficulty so great as that of finding reasons for not admitting those conclusions of the sectarian which he was unable to answer. His common resource, when pressed very hard, was to take the matter up in a personal light, and

—prove his doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks.

But, even in this species of logic, he was still no adequate match for the sectarian, whose Irish blood could be easily made to rise above the zero of his Christian theory, and suggest some tremendous carnal execution.

After the hearts of both had been softened by one half hour's steady application to the punch-jug, Aaron suddenly broke, out of a conversation on general subjects, into the following speech :

“Look you hether, David Lenigan! You are a dacent, credible youth, an’ I love you. Your people an’ my people lived in the same town, an’ dealt together for teas, an’ groceries, an’ things, an’ I have every raison to love and like you.”

“Its throe for you, Mither Aaron, we wor ould neighbours, surely.”

“An’ its for that raison, Davy, I wish you well, an’ I’d wish I had the power to put your father’s child in a palace this blessed night.”

“I never misdoubted your good will, indeed, Mither Aaron.”

“Don’t Davy, don’t, for the world. An’ still, Davy,” Aaron continued, setting down

his tumbler with a solemn face, "if I *could* put you in a palace, where would be the gain? The palaces of this world, Davy, are like houses of snow —"

Davy groaned internally.

"—Which melt away in the first thaw, an' lave us could an' defenceless, but the palaces of light are the only palaces that's worth a Christian's while to look for."

"I won't gainsay *that*," said Davy, with emphasis.

"You couldn't, Davy, if you would. You couldn't gainsay the——"

He was going to say the Bible; but recollecting that Davy was not privileged to qualify himself for a controversy on this subject, he stopped short, with a smile of pity and contemptuous forbearance. Davy perceived the sneer, and found it impossible to evade the contest any longer.

"Look hether, Mither Aaron," he began.

“ They may say this and that of the Bible, an’ of the best way to heaven, but I’ll tell you what it is. I seen a man of a day that read more books than you or I ever saw in our lives, an’ I heerd that man say that there was no use in talkin’, but whether a man was a Roman, a Protestant, a Methodish or a Quaker, the best way in the world for gettin’ into heaven was just —— to go there, simply. ”

“ Well, friend, Davy, an’ do you b’lieve him ? ”

“ I does ! ” said Davy, stoutly, “ I think that there’s no persuasion * goin’ but a part of ’em will go to heaven, some time. ”

“ What *all*, Davy ? ”

“ Iss, all——barrin’ it was, may be, the Turks or the Arabians. Ayeh, what talk it is ! Listen hether. Wor you ever at Glendalough ? ”

“ I was,” replied Aaron, with a contemptuous smile.

* Religion.

“And did you see the seven Churches?”

“I did.”

“The round tower, and the Cathedhral, an St. Kavin’s Kitchen?”

Aaron lowered his head in dignified assent.

“Well, then, if you did, listen hether. Do you mind me now, Mither Aaron? The mas-ther abroad has the heighth o’ that table o’ bibles of all sorts and sizes, and he thinks he’s the firsht that’s bringing’ em into Ireland. But harken hether! Do you think the saints, an’ the great people long ago, that built them churches, that stone roof, and that round tower, that all the masons in Europe could’nt do the likes now, if they were at it from this till mornin’, do you think them saints did’nt know anythin’ o’ the scripthurs?”

Aaron was silent for a moment.

“Do you think,” continued Davy, pressing his question, “that them saints are burnin’ in hell this day?”

“ I judge nobody, but — ”

“ There why ! ” cried Davy in triumph, “ and you talk to me of bibles and things ! Ayeh, Misther Aaron, take it from me, tis’nt by readin’ or writin’, we’ll ever get into heaven, only by doin’ our duty properly. ”

“ Hold you there ! ” cried Aaron, “ there’s the point, you know. What is your duty, Davy ? ”

“ My duty, ” said David, a little puzzled, “ is, as I may say, to do my duty, as it were, by all manner o’ people, high an’ low, gentle an’ simple ; that’s my maxim, an’ that’s what I go by ever. ”

“ Well, an’ will I tell you a plain truth now, Davy, as a friend ? ”

“ You’re freely welcome. ”

“ Why then I will. You know no more of your duty, Davy Lenigan, than that cat on the stool. You belong to a church that leads you about like poor Blind Buff, with a hankitcher

on your eyes, an' a gag on your mouth, an' most commonly 'tis where it leads you is to the gallows-foot, to edify your friends with a lamentation. Did you ever see a methodist hung?"

"If I didn't" said Davy warmly, "I seen methodishes that desarved it. The pride an' the conçait o' ye bates the world. Ye're just the dandy Christhens above all others! Ayeh what talks! Ye think it is a standin' collar and a low crowned hat that 'll take ye into heaven. I don't know my juty! E' howl your tongue, you foolish man! I suppose if I axed the same question o' you, youd' tell me your juty was to comb your hair straight, an' spake through your nose, an' to keep your knees bent in walkin', an' your crubeens turned in, an' to wear a shovel of a hat upon your pole, and a round cut coat. That's the whole o' the methodishes catechism. All the defference betune us is, that I let the priest lead me to heaven his own way, an' you

give you sowl to the tailor. It's thrue for Thady Ryan, the poet westwards, what he says o' ye, in his ballad o' the Recantation of Father Hannan, an' he spakin' o' the Catholic Church :—

Through Europe (says he) did resound
The laws she did expound—
Why did you (says he) attempt to forsake her ?
Her banners she displayed
In triumph night an' day,
She's shuparior (says he) to Swaddler or Quaker.

“ Mind, I don't say any thing again' the swaddlers for industherin'. They're strict an' credible people, surely, in that line. But as for the religion—”

Here Aaron could hold no longer—

“ You poor despiseable papist !” he began, “ it is like you' an' your people, to be always ignorant an' presumptuous ; I will prove to you—”

“ Howl a minute !” cried Davy, “ ignorant an' presumptuous ? Before I hear another word from

you now, afther that, I must know what raison you have for sayin' it. Tell me this, he added, rising from his chair, and confronting the sectarian with an attitude of imposing majesty ; " if you're such a great fellow entirely, can you calculate the eclipse o' the moon ? "

This was a thunderstroke. Aaron, so far from being able to answer Davy's question in the affirmative, did not even find it intelligible. He winced, and shrunk from the learned scrutiny of Davy's glance, but his confusion betrayed him.

" You can't ! " cried Davy, in great triumph : " An' you talk to me of ignorance ? Poh ! " And snapping his fingers in the face of his opponent, with a shrill exclamation of scorn, he turned round upon his heel and resumed his seat.

The controversy was here interrupted by strange sounds above stairs. In the room directly over their heads, they heard the noise of many feet hurrying to and fro, as if some accident had taken place, and, in a few minutes, the old nurse

was seen hobbling into the hall with symptoms of wild alarm and confusion on her countenance.

“Aaron Shepherd! Aaron Shepherd,” she exclaimed, wringing her hands with an air of grief and impatience! “run, run for the docthor, as fast as ever you can lay leg to ground! The young missiz is in a fit, an’ I’m afeerd she’s dyin.’”

“Dying’, woman?”

“Dyin’; away with you, Aaron, or he never ’ill overtake her alive! Oh, vo! there I hear ’em again above stairs! Run Aaron, run for the bare life!”

This was the signal for general consternation. In one minute Aaron and his low hat were speeding through the moonshine in one direction, while Davy Lenigan took the wild mountain road which led to Glendalough, not displeased at the opportunity of escape from his polemical opponent, and little afflicted at the condition of Esther; for her infidelity to his master had shaken, considerably, the interest she possessed in his affections.

CHAPTER VII.

THE most striking characteristic of the Wicklow scenery is that of intense, though not oppressive, loneliness. The road which our polemic pursued, after leaving the mansion of Glendearg, was a wild and broken track, winding amid a wilderness of mountain heath, and granite. Sometimes a stream, hurrying downward through the masses of rock that made the desert horrid, broke suddenly upon his path, foaming and glittering in the

moonlight, and making a dreary sound in the midnight solitude. Sometimes the distant barking of a dog augmented the sense of extreme loneliness which the scene occasioned, by the slight suggestion of a contrast which it afforded. Sometimes a gust of wind swept down between the fissures of the hills, and hurrying along the valley side, sunk down and whist again, with a wail that had something in it of a supernatural effect. The beautiful terrors of the scene were, however, all lost on Davy.

A cloud had stolen across the moon, when he descended that rugged part of the road which leads downward upon the lake of Lug-gela. He stepped out upon a rock, which overlooks the valley on the north-western side, and endeavoured, in the dim light, to gather in the outline of the scene beneath him ! This enchanting little region, like all the lake scenery of Wicklow, owes its principal fascin-

ation to the effect of contrast which is produced on the beholder's mind by the dreary wildness of the barren mountain road by which it is approached. While our pedestrian stood upon the rock, the veil was suddenly withdrawn from the disk of the "full-blown" moon, and a flood of tender light was poured upon the scene, clothing the cliffs, the lake, the trees, and the whole coup d'œil in a mantle of bluish silver.

He saw, beneath him, embosomed among the brown hills, a little valley full of beauty, full of varied loveliness, full of character, and of romantic interest. On his right was a deep glen, rugged with masses of granite, and intersected by a small stream which supplied the basin of the lake, and whose origin was concealed amid the windings of the barren defile. Following the course of this stream, the eye soon beheld it creeping out from among the rocks, gliding with many

a snake-like winding along a green and cultivated champaign, and mingling into the lake with so gentle a current that the profound repose of its gleaming surface was unbroken by a single curl. Beneath him, on his left, in a nook of this sequestered valley, and commanding the beautiful plain before described, stood a mansion in the pointed style of architecture; and here the scene was enriched and humanized by plantations, pleasure grounds, garden plats, and other luxurious incidents, which gave a softening character of leisure to the retreat. Farther to his left, lay the calm expanse of water, from which the scene derives its name, and which occupied an area between three lofty mountains, each of which descended suddenly upon the very borders of the lake, and presented a variety of shore which was wonderful in a scene so limited. On one side appeared a tumbling cliff, composed of innumerable loose masses of

granite, piled together to the height of a thousand feet, without a single trace of vegetation : farther on, the waters kissed the foot of a hill, that was clothed, from the summit to the very verge of the lake, in a mantle of the freshest verdure : farther on still, the shores were shadowed by over-hanging woods of pine and beech, and before the circuit of the basin had been made, the waters were found rolling in their tiny wavelets of crystal, over a level sandy beach, composed of triturated granite, and forming the border of the lawn already mentioned. The effect of the whole picture was heightened, at this moment, by the peculiar light, which softened down the rougher features of the scene, and gave a gentle and sparkling brilliancy to those parts that were distinguished by their beauty and refinement. Over half the surface of the lake, the gigantic shadow of Carrigamanne mountain (the granite cliff before described) was flung by the

declining moon, with a sharp distinctness of outline, veiling half the waters in the deepest shade, while the remainder mimicked the vault of the star-lit heaven above within a plain of bright and streaky silver.

The poor pedestrian remained, gazing long upon this scene, for he remembered the time when his young master, Francis Riordan, and himself, were accustomed to spend whole summer days upon the lake, paddling luxuriously along the mountain sides, or standing out in the centre and looking for trout. He remembered the time when he sat resting on his oars in the bow, while the slight and beautiful boy was wont to lie back on the stern seats, for many minutes together, gazing on the glassy water, and humming over that enchanting air,* the character of which is so exquisitely

* The air of Luggela, to which Moore has adapted that perfection of lyric melody, commencing

“No, not more welcome the fairy numbers, &c.”

adapted to the scene from which it takes its name.

On a sudden, the ears of Davy were greeted by a strain of music so singular, so novel in its character, and yet so sweet, that it bound him to the spot, in an ecstasy of surprize and admiration. It seemed like a concert of many instruments, and yet it was little louder in its tones than the murmuring of a hive of summer bees. Sometimes it swelled out into a strain of wailing harmony like the moan of an Eolian harp, and sometimes faded away into

A sound so fine that nothing lived
'Tween it and silence.

And then a rich masculine voice, improved into an almost magical sweetness by the loneliness of the place, took up the following melody, which was executed with a skill that told of continental accomplishment:

I.

Hark ! hark ! the soft bugle sounds over the wood,
And thrills in the silence of even ;
Till faint and more faint, in the far solitude,
It dies on the portals of heaven !
But echo springs up from her home in the rock,
And seizes the perishing strain ;
And sends the gay challenge with shadowy mock
From mountain to mountain again,
And again !
From mountain to mountain again.

II.

Oh, thus let my love, like a sound of delight,
Be around thee while shines the glad day,
And leave thee, unpain'd, in the silence of night,
And die like sweet music away.
While hope, with her warm light, thy glancing eye fills ;
Oh, say, " Like that echoing strain,
Though the sound of his love has died over the hills,
It will waken in heaven again,"
And again !
It will waken in heaven again.

The song ceased, and the listener could hear
the words, " Again, and again ! " floating off
and fainting in the bosom of the distant vallies.

In a few minutes a small boat emerged from

that part of the lake which was darkened by the shadow of the mountain, and gliding rapidly over the star-spangled abyss that lay between, buried its light keel in the sandy beach above described; two men leaped on the shore, and Davy thought he saw, from the head-dress of one, a plume of coloured feathers waving in the moonlight. The night was so calm, that he could hear the voices of both with perfect distinctness. Perceiving that he of the plume was about to take the road to Roundwood, Davy hurried forward on his own track, measuring his speed so as that he might encounter the stranger as nearly as possible at the point on the heath where the two roads joined.

In this he was successful. The stranger, in answer to Davy's courteous greeting, touched his hat lightly with his finger, and, folding his cloak around him, continued his journey in silence. When they had reached that turn in the road at which, by a single step, the tra-

veller may shut out from his view the delicious valley above described, the stranger, who seemed to be well acquainted with the scenery, turned suddenly round, and gazed for a long time, without the least sound or motion upon the moonlit scene. At length, seeming to gather his arms more closely upon his breast, and bending his head low, he strode forward, at a more rapid pace, and soon overtook Davy, who was loitering a few paces in advance.

“Do you go to Roundwood, friend?” asked the stranger, in what Davy called an “Englified” accent.

This was the spell-word which, like the first speech addressed to a spirit, put an end to Davy’s silence, and left him free to become as inquisitive and communicative as he pleased.

“A little beyant it plase your honour,” he said, touching his hat; “as far as Glendalough.”

“Do you live at the Seven Churches, then?”

“I do, sir, just hard by the barrack of Drumgoff,

where my brother keeps a little school. I was over among the mountains, a piece, at Misthur Damer's, of Glendearg, getting him to put in a good word for me with the Archbishop, in regard of the lase o' my little place, over."

He paused, as if in the expectation that the stranger might put in a word, to sustain his share of the conversation, but the latter continued silent.

"Great doings at Glendearg, sir," Davy, added; "nothing but marryin,' marryin,' ever an' always."

Even this bait failed to awaken the stranger's curiosity, and for some minutes both were silent.

"Dear knows, then, this is a lonesome road," was Davy's next effort at opening a confidential intercourse. "I would'nt like to cross the mountains to Roundwood alone to-night, not that I ever saw anything uglier than myself, thank heaven, in all my rambles, but people says a dale about sperrits, that way at night. Will you

take it as an offence, sir, now, if I ask your honour one question?"

"That will depend altogether, my good friend, upon the nature of the question itself."

"Surely, sir, surely. Well, it's what I was going to say was, that I know a family from Dublin that come here last year, and of all the world, I never heard anything more like the tone o' their voice than what your honour's is. The Nortons, sir, a fine likely family indeed, and 'tis what I thought when I heard your honours, was that may be, says I, 'tis one o' the young Misthur Nortons I have there, and sure enough, says, I 'tis Misthur George, that went out with the pathriots, for I see the green feather flirtin' up in his hat, an' he comin' up the road?"

"My voice, then," said the stranger, "is not unfamiliar to you?"

"I declare then, no," said Davy, "I have a feelin' greatly in myself when I hear you talkin', as I may say."

“And the best conjecture you can make is that I am young Mr. Norton of Dublin?”

“I’m thinkin’ so, sir.”

“I hope I may not find all my old friends in Ireland so forgetful, and yet there are many there by whom I do not feel anxious to be recollected. Your name is David Lenigan?”

“It is, abo’ boord!”

“Were you ever in service?”

“Never but the once’t when I was coortin’ Gracey Guerin.”

“And would you know,” said the stranger in a hollow voice, standing still himself, and causing David also to do so, by laying a finger against his shoulder. “Would you know your master if if you saw him again?”

At this question, David drew back with a secret misgiving at the heart, and a cold creeping of the skin, such as is occasioned by the extremest horror of which human nature is capable. He gazed fearfully on the tall figure that stood before

him, and as the moonshine fell upon his worn and sallow countenance and large watery eyes, a terrific recognition began to awake within his heart. The stranger, mean while, remained standing at his full height, his head thrown back, as if to invite enquiry, one foot advanced a little, and one worn hand gathering the drapery of his capacious war-cloak around his handsome person.

“Aye!” he said, after a long pause: “I have triumphed! Once more I tread the land I trod in childhood, once more, with an unsullied name, I walk the soil that hides the ashes of my fathers! I left it poor, I return wealthy; I left it in shame for my species, in sorrow for the name of man, I stand to gaze upon it now, proud of that name, and proud that I belong to such a race of beings. I look upon these hills, the lakes, the streams, the woods, and that pale moon that lights their loveliness, and I say, Shine on, for we are worthy of your light; bloom on, for we

are worthy of your beauties! I have seen, at last, that sight for which my boyish heart had yearned almost to bursting. I have seen a people rising in their anger, and challenging the rights that nature gave them. I have lifted my hand with theirs towards the free heaven, and struck with them for liberty. I have seen them prosper, I have seen tyranny struck to the dust; and now my heart is satisfied. Men now may turn their swords into ploughshares and pruning hooks, for they have done enough to show that the old spirit still lives upon the earth, and to give a Grecian lesson to posterity."

At the close of this speech, Davy had just recovered sufficient presence of mind to stretch out his hands towards the stranger, and exclaim, in a hoarse and broken whisper, while his teeth chattered, and his limbs shook with fear "Oh, Masther Francis, is it you?"

"My poor fellow," said the stranger, still,

in the same loud and excited tone: "I am indeed your master, Francis Riordan."

The faithful servant remained for a considerable time without the power of speech. "We thought you were dead, sir," he gasped forth at length.

"There was a time when I would have rejoiced to give occasion to such a rumour," said Riordan: "but what a brilliant fortune I would then have lost! To see the cause succeed to which I had devoted my life and labour, to come back once more in health and honour to my native land, and even, before my youth had fled, to return with all my youthful hopes accomplished."

"But, Master Francis, ar'nt you afeerd, for all?"

"Afraid! of what?"

Davy cast a glance over each shoulder, alternately, as if to be assured that they stood alone in the wilderness, and then said, "Why

then, nothin', sir, only of that ould business about the boys you know."

Francis burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. "Nay, nay," said he, "I can't think there is great danger of my finding people's memories so very acute. My enemies must not have sharper recollections than my friends."

"Ayeh, then, I declare I would'nt trust Richard Lacy for forgettin'."

"Nor I, nor I, if it were his interest any longer to remember."

"O then, O then, sure, Masther, 'tis it that is his intherest, an' nothin' else. O dear! O dear, dear! Oh, Esther Wilderming! the heavens look down on you this blessed night!"

The moment he had said these words, the stranger seemed on a sudden to have lost a foot of his customary stature. His proud and soldier-like bearing was altered in an instant. He walked off the road and sat down, for some moments, on a rock which lay near, evidently

greatly affected, but not hiding his face, nor by any avoidable action suffering his agitation to appear."

"Come hither!" he said to his attendant, after a pause of painful silence, "what do you say of Esther?"

"Oh, then, Masther Francis, I declare I do'nt like to say any thing about it to you."

"Speak on!" said Riordan, with a portentous calmness in his accent.

"You're sick and weary now, sir, afther your journey."

"Speak on, speak on," repeated Riordan in the same tone.

"Come on to Roundwood, Masther, an' I'll tell you, when you're well an' hearty in the mornin'. Dear knows, a sleep would be better to you now than news like this."

"Speak, sir!" cried Francis, in a voice of sudden passion, springing to his feet, and shaking his clenched hand in the face of his servant,

“speak, sir, or I will strike you to the earth! You hint a horrid ruin in my ear, and bid me wait your pleasure for the telling; you fling me on a rack, and bid me sleep! What of Miss Wilderming?”

“She is——” Davy began——

“Dead!” cried the soldier, observing him hesitate.

“Not dead, sir, no——”

“Not dead, thank heaven! But ill?”

“Wisha faix, that’s not it, sir, neither.”

“What then?” He looked for some moments closely into David’s face, and said, with a vexed laugh: “She is not married, sure?”

“Oh, no, sir!”

“No!” cried Riordan, starting back, with a burst of enthusiastic confidence, “My Esther is not false! In all my toils, in all my sufferings, in all my trials, dangers, and afflictions, that base, ungenerous doubt has never crossed my mind, even for an instant. My breast is full of

confidence towards her. Oh, I am as sure of Esther's love as I am of my own truth, in her regard, of your fidelity, of Lacy's hatred !”

He paused, as if in expectation of Davy's speech, but the latter continued silent, looking fixedly on the ground, and giving utterance occasionally to a deep moan.

“What is it that you fear to tell me, Lenigan ?” continued the young patriot, “why do hesitate, and moan, and look downwards ? Out with it man, whatever be the event. One thing at any rate, I cannot fear, and that is Esther Wilderming's unkindness. I never will look upon her face with a sad heart, unless I should live to see her in her coffin.”

“Why then, since you say ‘coffin’ Masther,” said Davy, “I declare I'd rather see her in her coffin, than where she is to be, in misther Lacy's house.”

“Than where ?” said Riordan, stepping back, and speaking in a whisper between his teeth.

“ Oh, then in Lacy’s house ! ”

“ What have you said ? ” cried Riordan, leaning with both hands on David’s shoulder and speaking in a low voice. “ Nay, speak not !—do you think I can bear that ? ”

“ Oh, Masther Frank ! ”

“ Listen, or I will tread your into powder ! Answer each question I shall ask you briefly, quickly, and most truly, sir, or I will stop your speech for ever. Where is Esther ? ”

“ Over at Glendearg. ”

“ And well ? ”

“ Iss, purty well. ”

“ Married, ” he paused and panted heavily, “ married, or not ? ”

“ Not married, yet. ”

“ What then ? She is contracted ? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ To whom ? ”

“ To Richard Lacy. ”

“ Torture and death ! ” the young man cried

aloud, flinging Leuigan from him, and stamping furiously against the road.

He stood for some minutes in an attitude of rigid agony, with both hands pressed upon his forehead, and the fingers twined in his hair, as if with the intention of tearing it up by the roots.

“Let there be” he said at last, “no error here. Is it *that* Lacy? Has she given herself away to my enemy?”

“To him, then, and to no other.”

“Oh, you have said enough! My heart will burst—Stand back! Oh, what a rival! ah, stand aside, for I am losing breath—Oh, peaceful moon, what constancy is this! Come hither, sir, let me lean on your shoulder.”

“Wisha, dear knows—”

“Stand still. Fie, fie, my heart is beating like a boy’s. I never dreamed this might be possible. I am very feverish. Oh, shame! shame! shame!”

“ Dear knows, sir ! ”

“ How she deceived me, and how I loved her ! I would have staked my life upon her truth—I would have died for her, and she forgets me ! Married to Lacy ! Why, of all the names on earth, should she have chosen that one to curse me with ? Oh, if the memories of our early love, that very bank, that stream, that quiet grove, the lonely twilight and the young fresh dawn, that had so often lighted us in our accustomed walks—if all these recollections had not power to hold her to her ancient faith, why need she, at the least, have struck the blow so deeply ! I told her, at our parting, that I could not change, and I spoke the truth. I have been tempted, too. Wealthy, and beautiful, and high-born was the being that put my true affections to the trial. I was poor then, and friendless, and I went up all alone to the house top, in the calm and burning noontide, to look to the east and think of her whom I had left in our own

distant island. The sky was clear and still, the woods were silent, a stream plashed at a little distance, and I thought of former times. I lifted my hands to heaven, and I said, No!—let my fate be gloomy as it may, let me die young, and in a foreign land, but never will I meditate falsehood to my country, or to my love. I kept my truth, and this is my reward!”

“ Oh, then, sir,” said Davy, “ I have that notion o’ the women, that if they wished to prove thrue, itself, they could’nt keep from rovin’ an’ to do their besht.”

“ But she has found her punishment even in her crime. Married to Richard Lacy! I could not curse her more deeply than to wish Lacy’s heart in the breast of him who was to govern her destiny. Ah, fie upon her falsehood! I am a fool to trouble myself about it.—Davy!”

“ Well, masther ? ”

“ When is the marriage to take place ? ”

“ This week, sir, as I hear.”

“ Ah, shame upon her ! And at Glendearg ?”

“ Providen’ she is bettther before then.”

“ What, is she ill, then ? What’s the matter ?
Speak, sir ! Yet, what is it to me ? Tell me
nothing of it. From this time forward, I disclaim
all interest in that cold, fickle creature. I have
done with her for ever. What ! she is not then
suffered to carry it through with unruffled plumes
and a heart entirely free. Well, well, though
she is worthless, I am sorry to hear this.”

“ Ah, masther, you’re too hard upon
her.”

“ Do you think so David ? You are a faith-
ful fellow.”

“ ’Tis unknown, sir, what coaxin’ an’ arguefyin’
they had at her, over at Glendearg, to make her say
the word that she’d marry Lacy.

“ Ha ! do you know this ?”

“ To be sure, I do. Did’nt she remain
shut up in her house for as good as four years

a'most, without seein' a crather, hardly, until we heerd of your death?"

"Aye, I forget ; you spoke of some such rumour. And Esther heard of this?"

"The world wide heard of it. Sure it was printed in the papers all over Ireland. 'Tis afther that, sure, Lacy come coortin' of her agin, an' she would'nt have any thing to say to him for a long while, only the death of her mother, an' Mr. Damer's arguefyin,' an' every thing, forced her to it at last, an' she got the sickness on the head of it."

"Forced her!" cried Riordan, in a tone of extreme surprise.

"Iss—Misther Damer."

"And does he think," the young man exclaimed, with sudden vehemence, "does he imagine that he can complete this sacrifice while she has got a friend on earth to save her? I am in error here. Her parents dead, her guardian cold and cruel, her hope of my return for ever de-

stroyed, and her own health decayed. I have wronged, and I will save her; I will snatch her from him at the altar's foot, and when I have placed her at my side again, let me see the man who dares to come between us. Hold, Davy, stop one moment. You must return to Glendearg, and take from me a note to Esther Wilderming. To-night I sleep in Roundwood; to-morrow, some business takes me to Enniskerry, but I will be with you at Glendalough, to hear your answer, in the evening, and that must guide us in our future conduct."

He wrote with a pencil a short note, which he folded and placed in the hands of his attendant, bidding him use the needful secrecy in its delivery.

"I'll give it to Mrs. Keleher," said Davy, "for, dear knows, I'm in no hurry at all to have any talk with Misther Aaron!"

"What, is poor Aaron Shepherd living still?"

“ Oh, then ’tis he that is, an’ ’tis I that has raison to know it.”

“ Poor Aaron !”

“ Dear knows, I think that man would bother the world, convartin’ ’em. I declare to my heart what I ait an’ dhrink at that house doesn’t do me good, I’m so smothered from bibles, an’ thracts of all kinds. Arguefyin’, arguefyin’, for ever. Erra, sure if a man had a head as long as my arm, ’twould set him to have an answer ready for every question they’d ax him that way. But I’m promised a copy o’ the Fifty Raisons next week, an’ indeed when I get it I’ll give Aaron his due. Well, masther Frank, good night, sir, an’ the heavens bless an’ direct you. I’ll go no farther now, as I’m to return to Glendearg.”

“ Good night, good fellow. I will remember your honesty and your attachment, David, when I am once more at peace.”

“ Oh, then, don’t speak of it, masther Frank. ’Tis enough for me to see you well, an’ hearty, an’

more than I expected to see, sure. Well, well, only to think o' this! Alive and here in Ireland afther all! That I may never die in sin, but it bates out all the fables that ever was wrote."

He turned away, and, as he descended through the rocks, Francis could hear him, at a long distance, in the calm moonlight, singing the following lines of a controversial ballad:—

When woeful heresy
And infidelity
Combined for to raise disconsolation,
You forsook that holy church
That would not lave you in the lurch,
And publicly denied your ordination.
Your name it will appear
Through Ireland far and near,
In Limerick, in Cork and Dungannon,
In Belfast and Dublin town
Your conduct will be shown
An' they'll talk o' the revolted Father Hannan.

Young Riordan remained for several minutes gazing on the moonlit desert, by which he was surrounded, and delivering up his mind to the roman-

tic nature of the scene, and of the circumstances under which he now beheld it, after years of suffering and of exile.

“ Alive, and here in Ireland ! he exclaimed, repeating the words of his old follower—“ Even so, my drooping country. I left these hills in sorrow and in fear, and now I come again, in joy and safety, to challenge the fulfilment of my youthful dreams. Ye hills, that seemed to my infant fancy the boundaries of earth itself ; ye barren wilds, that my untutored eye could find as blooming as the gardens of Armida ; ye lakes and streams, into which I have so often gazed, and longed to dive into the mirrored heaven beneath ; ye fresh, familiar winds, that even now waken in my mind a thousand sudden sweet remembrances ; ye rocks, trees, waters, all ye shapes and hues that constitute my home, I hail you from my heart ! There’s not a bell blooms on the brown heath of these, my native mountains, but my heart loves with a particular

fondness. There's not a rock frowns downward from those dreary summits but leaves the luxuries of all the tropics behind-hand in my estimation. Oh ! and shall ye still greet me with the same young and constant smile ; shall ye still offer to my sense the same unaltered sights and sounds ; shall the winds blow, the waters run, the mountains and the rocks rebuke the morning with the same sad frown as in my infancy, and all remain unchanged, except my love ? I will not think it. Now, from this time forward, I never will anticipate an evil. My life has been a life of fears and toils, and now I never more will cease to hope. The cloud may gather dense, as night itself, above my head, but, 'till it bursts, I never will believe that it bears thunder in its womb. I must succeed ; I must be gay and happy ; I toss my doubts and sorrows to the winds, and welcome joy ! bright joy ! with a full heart to hold it."

After this enthusiastic speech, the high-spi-

rited young soldier threw his cloak around his glowing frame, and hurried off in the direction of his native village. Young nerves, young blood, young feelings and young hopes, combined to keep his spirits in that buoyant state to which his fancy had excited them, and he trod along the mountain path as if it were entirely by his own free election that he preferred the earth to air.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE school-house, at Glendalough, was situated near the romantic river which flows between the wild scenery of Drumgoff and the Seven Churches. It was a low, stone building, indifferently thatched ; the whole interior consisting of one oblong room, floored with clay, and lighted by two or three windows, the panes of which were patched with old copy-books, or altogether supplanted by school-slates. The walls had

once been plastered and whitewashed, but now partook of that appearance of dilapidation which characterized the whole building. In many places, which yet remained uninjured, the malign spirit of Satire (a demon for whom the court is not too high, nor the cottage too humble) had developed itself in sundry amusing and ingenious devices. Here, with the end of a burnt stick, was traced the hideous outline of a human profile, professing to be a likeness of "Tom Guerin," and here might be seen the "woeful lamentation, and dying declaration, of Neddy Mulcahy," while that worthy dangled in effigy from a gallows overhead. In some instances, indeed, the village Hogarth, with peculiar hardihood, seemed to have sketched in a slight hit at "the Masther," the formidable Mr. Lenigan, himself. Along each wall were placed a row of large stones, the one intended to furnish seats for the boys, the other for the

girls, the decorum of Mr. Lenigan's establishment requiring that they should be kept apart, on ordinary occasions, for Mr. Lenigan, it should be understood, had not been favoured with any Pestalozzian light. The only chair, in the whole establishment, was that which was usually occupied by Mr. Lenigan himself, and a table appeared to be a luxury of which they were either ignorant or wholly regardless.*

On the morning after the conversation detailed in the last chapter, Mr. Lenigan was rather later than his usual hour in taking possession of the chair above alluded to.

*A traveller in Ireland who is acquainted with the ancient Chronicles of the country, must be struck by the resemblance between the manners of the ancient and modern Irish in their mode of education. In that translation of Stanihurst, which Holingshed admits into his collection, we find the following passage: "In their schools they grovel upon couches of straw, their books at their noses, themselves lie flat prostrate, and so they chant out with a loud voice their lessons by piecemeal, repeating two or three words thirty or forty times together." The system of mnemonics, described in the last sentence, is still in vigorous use.

The sun was mounting swiftly up the heavens. The rows of stones, before described, were already occupied, and the babble of a hundred voices, like the sound of a bee-hive, filled the house. Now and then, a school boy, in frieze coat and corduroy trowsers, with an ink-bottle dangling at his breast, a copy-book, slate, Voster, and "reading-book," under one arm, and a sod of turf under the other, dropped in, and took his place upon the next unoccupied stone. A great boy, with a huge slate in his arms, stood in the centre of the apartment, making a list of all those who were guilty of any indecorum in the absence of "the Masther." Near the door, was a blazing turf fire, which the sharp autumnal winds already rendered agreeable. In a corner behind the door lay a heap of fuel, formed by the contributions of all the scholars, each being obliged to

bring one sod of turf every day, and each having the privilege of sitting by the fire while his own sod was burning. Those who failed to pay their tribute of fuel sat cold and shivering the whole day long at the farther end of the room, huddling together their bare and frost bitten toes, and casting a longing, envious eye toward the peristyle of well-marbled shins that surrounded the fire.

Full in the influence of the cherishing flame, was placed the hay-bottomed chair that supported the person of Mr. Henry Lenigan, when that great man presided in person in his rural seminary. On his right, lay a close bush of hazel, of astonishing size, the emblem of his authority and the instrument of castigation. Near this was a wooden "sthroker," that is to say, a large rule of smooth and polished deal, used for "sthroking" lines in the copy book, and also for "sthroking" the palms of the refractory pupils. On the other side, lay a lofty heap of copy books, which were left there by the boys and girls for

the purpose of having their copies “sot” by “the Master.”

About noon, a sudden hush was produced by the appearance, at the open door, of a young man dressed in rusty black, and with something clerical in his costume and demeanour. This was Mr. Lenigan’s classical assistant; for to himself the volumes of ancient literature were a fountain sealed. Five or six stout young men, all of whom were intended for learned professions, were the only portion of Mr. Lenigan’s scholars that aspired to those lofty sources of information. At the sound of the word “Virgil!” from the lips of the assistant, the whole class started from their seats, and crowded round him, each brandishing a smoky volume of the great Augustan poet, who, could he have looked into this Irish academy, from that part of the infernal regions in which he has been placed by his pupil Dante, might have been tempted to exclaim in the pathetic words of his own hero :

——Sunt hic etiam sua præmia laudi,
Sunt lachryma rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.

“Who’s head?” was the first question proposed by the assistant, after he had thrown open the volume at that part marked as the day’s lesson.

“Jim Naughtin, sir.”

“Well, Naughtin, begin. Consther, consther,* now, an’ be quick :

At puer Ascanius mediis in vallibus acri
Gaudet equo : jamque hos cursu, jam præterit illos :
Spumantemque dari—

“Go on, sir, why don’t you consther?”

“*At puer Ascanius*,” the person so addressed began, “but the boy Ascanius; *mediis in vallibus*, in the middle o’ the valleys; *gaudet*, rejoices.”

“Exults, a ’ra gal, exults is a betther word.”

“*Gaudet*, exults; *acri equo*, upon his bitther horse.”

“Oh, murther alive, his bitther horse, iñagh?”

*Construe, translate.

Erra, what would make a horse be bitther, Jim ? Sure tis'nt of sour beer he's talkin' ? Rejoicin' upon a bitther horse ! Dear knows, what a show he was, what raison he had for it ! *Acri equo*, upon his mettlesome steed, that's the construction."

Jim proceeded.

"*Acri equo*, upon his mettlesome steed ; *jamque*, and now ; *præterit*, he goes beyond :"

"Outsthrips, a-chree."

"*Præterit*, he outsthrips ; *hos*, these ; *jamque illòs*, and now those ; *cursu*, in his course ; *que*, and ; *optat*, he longs."

"Very good, Jim, *longs* is a very good word there, I thought you were goin' to say *wishes*. Did any body tell you that ?"

"Dickins a one, sir."

"That's a good boy. Well ?"

"*Optat*, he longs ; *spumantem aprum*, that a foaming boar ; *dari*, shall be given ; *votis*, to his

desires ; *aut fulvum leonem*, or that a tawny lion :”

“ That’s a good word, agin. *Tawny* is a good word ; betther than *yellow*.”

“ *Descendere*, shall descend ; *monte*, from the mountain.”

“ Now, boys, observe the beauty o’ the poet. There’s great nature in the picture of the boy Ascanius. Just the same way as we see young Mither Keiley, of the Grove, at the fox chase the other day, batin’ the whole of ’em, right an’ left, *jamque hos, jamque illos*, and now Mither Cleary, an’ now Captain Davis, he outstripped in his coorse. A beautiful picture, boys, there is in them four lines of a fine high-blooded youth. See ; people are always the same ; times an’ manners change, but the heart o’ man is the same now as it was in the days of Augustus. But consther your task, Jim, an’ then I’ll give you an’ the boys a little commentary upon its beauties.”

The boy obeyed, and read as far as *prætextit nomine culpam*, after which the assistant proceeded to pronounce his little commentary. Unwilling to deprive the literary world of any advantage which the mighty monarch of the Roman epopée may derive from his analysis, we subjoin the speech without any abridgment :

“ Now, boys, for what I told ye. Them seventeen lines, that Jim Naughten consthered this minute, contains as much as fifty in a modhern book. I pointed out to ye before the picture of Ascanius, an’ I’ll back it again’ the world for nature. Then there’s the incipient storm—

Interea magno misceri murmure cœlum

Incipit:

Erra, dont be talkin’, but listen to that ! There’s a rumblin’ in the language like the sound of comin’ thundher—

—insequitur commista grandine nimbus.

D'ye hear the change ? D'ye hear all the S's ?
D'ye hear 'em whistlin' ? D'ye hear the black
squall comin' up the hill side, brushin' up the
dust an' dhry leaves off the road, and hiss'n'
through the threes an' bushes ? an' d'ye hear
the hail dhriven' afther, an' spattherin' the laves,
and whitenin' the face of the counthry ? *Commista
grandine nimbus !* That I might'nt sin, but when
I read them words, I gather my head down
between my showldhers, as if it was hailin' a
top o' me. An' then the sighth of all the
huntin' party ! Dido, an' the Throjans, an' all
the great coort ladies, and the Tyrian com-
panions scatthered like cracked people about
the place, lookin' for shelther, an' peltin' about
right and left, hether and thether, in all directions
for the bare life, an' the floods swellin' an'
comin' thundherin' down in rivers from the
mountains, an' all in three lines :

Et Tyrii comites passim, et Trojana juvenus,
Dardaniusque nepos Veneris, diversa per agros
Tecta metû petiere : ruunt de montibus amnes.

And see the beauty o' the poet, followin' up the character of Ascanius, he makes him the last to quit the field. First the Tyrian comrades, an effeminate race, that ran at the sight of a shower, as if they were made o' salt, that they'd melt under it, and then the Throjan youth, lads that were used to it, in the first book ; and last of all the spirited boy Ascanius himself, (Silence near the doore!)

Speluncam Dido, dux et Trojanus eandem,
Deveniunt :

Observe, boys, he no longer calls him, as of old, the *pious Æneas*, only *dux Trojanus*, the Throjan laidher, an' tis he that was the laidher, an' the lad ; see the taste o' the poet, not to call him the pious Æneas now, nor even mention his name, as it were he was half ashamed of him ; knowin' well what a lad he had to dale with. There's where Virgil took the crust out o' Homer's mouth, in the nateness

of his language, that you'd gather a part o' the feelin' from the very shape o' the line an' turn o' the prosody. As, formerly, when Dido was asking Æneas concerning where he came from, an' where he was bound? he makes answer :

Est locus, Hesperiam Graii cognomine dicunt:
Terra antiqua, potens armis atque ubere glebæ,
Huc cursus fuit :

And there the line stops short, as much as to say, just as I cut this line short in spakin' to you, just so our coorse was cut, in going to Italy. The same way, when Juno is vexed in talkin' o' the Throjans, he makes her spake bad Latin to show how mad she is : (silence!)

——Mene incepto desistere victam,
Nec posse Italiâ Teucrorum avertere regem ?
Quippe vetor fatis ! Pallasne exurere classem
Argivum, atque ipsos potuit submergere ponto,

So he laves you to guess what a passion she

is in, when he makes her lave an infinitive mood without any thing to govern it. You can't attribute it to ignorance, for it would be a dhroll thing in airnest, if Juno, the queen of all the gods, didn't know a common rule in syntax, so that you have nothing for it but to say that she must be in the very moral of a fury. Such, boys, is the art o' poets, an' the *janius* o' languages.

But I kept ye long enough. Go along to ye'r Greek, now, as fast as ye can, an' rehearse. An' as for *ye*," continued the learned commentator, turning to the mass of English scholars, "I see one comin' over the river that 'll taich ye how to behave ye'rselves, as it is a thing ye wo'nt do for me. Put up ye'r Virgils, now, boys, an' out with the Greek, an' remember the beauties I pointed out to ye, for they're things that few can explain to ye, if ye have'nt the luck to think of 'em ye'rselves."

The class separated, and a hundred anxious

eyes were directed towards the open door. It afforded a glimpse of a sunny green and babbling river, over which Mr. Lenigan, followed by his brother David, was now observed in the act of picking his cautious way. At this apparition, a sudden change took place in the condition of the entire school. Stragglers flew to their places, the incipient burst of laughter was cut short, the growing fit of rage was quelled, the uplifted hand dropped harmless by the side of its owner, merry faces grew serious, and angry ones peaceable, the eyes of all seemed poring on their books, and the extravagant uproar of the last half hour was hushed, on a sudden, into a diligent murmur. Those who were most proficient in the study of "the Masther's" physiognomy, detected in the expression of his eyes, as he entered, and greeted his assistant, something of a troubled and uneasy character. He took the list, with a severe countenance, from the hands of the boy above mentioned, sent all

those whose names he found upon the fatal record, to kneel down in a corner until he should find leisure to "hoise" them, and then prepared to enter upon his daily functions.

Before taking his seat, however, he conferred, for a few moments, apart with his brother David, who, with a dejected attitude and a countenance, full of sorrow, stood leaning against the open door.

"Ah, 't is nt thinkin' of her I am at all, man alive," he said, in answer to some remonstratory observation from the school-master, "for, sure, what more could be expected, afther what she done? or what betther luck could she hope for? But its what kills me, Harry, is how I'll meet him or tell him of it at all. After what I seen of him the other night, what'll he do to me at all, when 'tis this news I bring him, afther he a' most killin' me before for sayin' less."

"If he was to kill any one," replied Mr.

Lenigan, "it ought to be Doctor Jervas, for sure what had you to do with the business?"

"Kill Doctor Jervas?" said a sweet voice at the door of the school-house, while at the same time a female shadow fell upon the sunny floor.—"Why then, that would be a pity and a loss. What is it he done?"

"Ayeh, nothin', nothin', woman," said David, impatiently.

The new comer was a handsome young woman, who carried a fat child in her arms and held another by the hand. The sensation of pleasure which ran among the young culprits, at her appearance, showed her to be their "great captain's captain;" the same, in fact, whom our readers may remember to have already met at the dispensary, and who, by a strict attention to the advice of her physician, had since then become the loved and loving helpmate of Mr. Lenigan. Casting, unperceived

by her lord, an encouraging smile towards the kneeling culprits, she took an opportunity, while engaged in a wheedling conversation with her husband, to purloin his deal rule, and to blot out the list of the proscribed from the slate, after which she stole out, calling David after her to dig the potatoes for dinner. That faithful adherent went out in deep dejection, and Mr. Lenigan, moving towards his official position near the fire, resumed the exercise of his authority.

Seated in his chair, and dropping the right leg over the left knee, he laid a copy-book upon this primitive desk, and began to set the boys and girls their head lines ; displaying his own proficiency in penmanship, through all the several gradations of “sthrokes, pothooks-an’-hangers, large-hand, round-hand, small-hand and running-hand.” The terror, which his first appearance had excited, dying away by degrees, the former tumult began to be renewed, and a din arose, in the midst of which, the voice of

the Masther and his scholar were hardly distinguishable. Occasionally, cries of "One here sir, scroodging!*" "One here, sir, callin' names!" "One here, sir, if you plase, runnin' out his tongue undher us," and similar complaints, were heard amidst the general babble. Mr. Lenigan never took notice of those solitary offences, but when they became too numerous, when the cup of iniquity seemed filled to the brim, and the uproar was at its height, it was his wont suddenly to place the pen between his teeth, lay aside the copy-book, seize the great hazel-bush before described, and walk rapidly along the two lines of stones, lashing the bare legs and naked feet of the young miscreants, heedless of the yells, groans and shrieks of terror and of anguish, by which he was surrounded, and exclaiming, as he proceeded, in a hoarse and angry tone, "Reharse! Reharse! Reharse! Now will ye heed me, now will ye

* Crushing.

rehearse?" Then, returning to his seat, amid the dying sounds of pain and suffering, which still broke faintly from various quarters, he resumed his occupations, enjoying, like a governor general, a peace, procured by the scourge ; by involving the guilty and the innocent in one common affliction. And this Lancasterian mode of castigation Mr. Lenigan was in the habit of repeating several times in the course of the day.

Frequently, while he continued his avocations, he looked with an absent and uneasy eye towards the river already mentioned, as if in the expectation of some visitor. Evening, however, approached, or (to use the school chronometer), the second lesson was over, and nobody appeared. This circumstance seemed to throw additional ill-humour into his physiognomy, and he seemed to long for some good opportunity of indulging it. The same absence of mind and depression of spirits was observed in

his conversation with those neighbours who strolled in upon him in the course of the afternoon, and talked of the politics of the day, the prospects of Europe, and other trivial subjects, such as suit the understanding and information of politicians in a country village.

It was the custom at Lenigan's academy, as it is at most Irish seminaries of a similar description, that no one should be permitted to leave the precincts of the school-room without taking with them a huge bone, (the femur of a horse) which lay for that purpose in the centre of the floor, and which, on account of the privilege of furlough which it conferred, was designated by the name of *The Pass*. There were many conveniences attending this regulation. It protected Mr. Lenigan from the annoyance of perpetual applications for leave of absence, and it prevented the absence of more than one at a time from the immediate sphere of the master's surveillance. There were, indeed, a few of the

grown boys, who were already forward in their classes, who understood book-keeping, compound interest, and enough of geometry to demonstrate the ass's bridge, and who, upon the strength of their acquirements, considered themselves privileged to condemn this boyish regulation, and to use their own discretion about studying in the open air and sunshine, stretched along the river's side, or under the shelter of the school-house.

An idle red-haired boy had been absent with *The Pass* for nearly a quarter of an hour, and Lenigan's countenance began to wax exceeding wroth at his delay. Suddenly he appeared at the door-way, through which the sinking sun now darted a more slanting beam, and tossed the bone into the centre of the floor, where it produced the same effect as if he had thrown it into a kennel of hounds. While they were wrangling for *The Pass*, the young delinquent pleaded his excuse with Mr. Lenigan, by in-

forming him that a gentleman was waiting for his brother David in the beech wood, at the other side of the river.

Mr. Lenigan committed the charge of the school, for some minutes, to his assistant, appointed a lad to "keep the list," breathed vengeance against all who should make an unruly use of his absence, shook his hand at the kneeling culprits in the corner, buttoned up his coat, and hopped across the threshold, with the view of finding his brother, who had little doubt that the stranger was no other than Francis Riordan.

CHAPTER IX.

IN a little opening of the beech wood, strewed with dry leaves and withered branches, and chequered with dancing gleams of sunshine, the young patriot stood, awaiting the arrival of his humble friend, with extreme impatience. Francis was one of those rare beings in whom fearless courage is combined with a delicate appreciation of what is right. He would himself have made any sacrifice, have endured any privation, have braved any danger, rather than do

violence to his own sense of what was honourable; and his attachments, as a natural consequence, were always doubly strong in proportion to the sacrifices which he made on their account. Without entertaining much doubt, as to the effect which his brief note might produce upon the mind of Esther, his anxiety to learn her answer approached a degree of torture.

And, here, it is fitting that the reader should be made aware of that early cause of quarrel which existed between Richard Lacy and our hero, and which was the immediate occasion of the long exile of the latter.

Several years since, it will be remembered, the south of Ireland was proclaimed to be in a state of disturbance, and a constabulary force was formed in all the baronies for the purpose of overawing the discontented peasantry. No great national good can ever be accomplished without drawing many individual afflictions in its train. So it proved on this occasion. The

formation of such a body afforded to those persons (so numerous in Ireland) who turn every public work into what is vulgarly termed a *job*, a good opportunity for the exercise of their vocation.

Richard Lacy was one of those magistrates who, at the period of which we speak, sought preferment by an emulative display of zeal and activity in the discharge of their duties. He scrupled the exercise of no cruelty which might place him frequently before the eyes of the privy council in the light of a diligent and useful officer, and he succeeded fully in his design. He became an object of terror to the peasantry, and of high favour at the Castle. He filled the gaols and transport ships with victims; he patrolled the country every night from sun-set to sun-rise, and earned the applause of his patrons, by rendering himself an object of detestation in his neighbourhood.

Amongst those persons of his own rank who

viewed the proceedings of Lacy with feelings of strong disapproval, was his young neighbour, Francis Riordan. Highly gifted, highly educated, patriotic even to a want of wisdom, and disinterested to a chivalrous degree, he stood forward in defence of the oppressed, and showed himself a determined and an able opponent of their oppressor. But a circumstance which occurred, at a time when their mutual hostility had reached its highest point, and which showed indeed but little prudence on the part of Riordan, placed him entirely within the power of his magisterial enemy.

A poor cottager in his neighbourhood had stolen out before day-break, for the purpose of taking his oats to market, which was at a considerable distance from his home. He fell into the hands of Lacy's night patrol, was tried before the Special Sessions, and received the customary sentence passed on all who were found absent from their homes between sun-set

and sun-rise ; namely, seven years' transportation to one of the colonies.

Aware of his innocence, and pitying his wretched family, who were thus deprived of their only support, young Riordan was for the first, and only time in his life, betrayed into an act which could not be justified even by the generous feeling in which it originated. He encouraged the prisoner's clan to attempt a rescue, and suggested a plan for his liberation, which evinced, at least, as much of talent as it did of disloyalty. It was carried into effect in the following manner.

On his way to the Cove of Cork, the prisoner was confined for a few days at the police barracks of ———, within a few miles of his own neighbourhood. It was a fine summer morning ; the police were loitering in the sunshine, while their arms were grounded inside the house. Their force was fifteen, including the serjeant and chief. The latter, seated on a

chair outside the door, with a silk handkerchief thrown over his head, to moderate the fervour of the sunshine, was employed in nursing his right foot in his lap, stroking the leg down gently from the knee to the ankle, and inhaling the fumes of a Havanna cigar.

On a sudden, a countryman presented himself before the door of the barrack, almost breathless from speed, and with a face that was flushed and glistening, as after violent exercise. He informed the chief that a number of the country people had detected a notorious disturber of the peace, for whose apprehension a large reward had been held out, and for whom the police had been for a long time on the watch. They were, he said, in the act of dragging him towards the barrack for the purpose of leaving him safe in the custody of the king's servants.

At the same moment a crowd of persons were seen hastily descending a neighbouring hill and hurrying along in the direction of the barrack.

When they came sufficiently near, it was observed that they had a prisoner in the midst, whom they bore along by the neck and heels with loud shouts and exclamations of triumph. Enraptured at his prize, the chief ordered them to be admitted into the barrack, while handcuffs were prepared for the culprit, and a room allotted for his confinement. The crisis of the adventure now approached. On a signal given by the prisoner, his captors loosed their hold; he sprung to his feet, struck the chief a blow that levelled him, shouted aloud to his companions, and exclaimed, "The arms! the arms! Down with the tyrants! Down with the —— Peelers!"

All was confusion in an instant. The arms were seized, the police were laid on their backs, and tied neck and heels, the doors were dashed in upon their hinges, the prisoners rushed out into the air, and, before five minutes, the whole stratagem was successfully concluded.

The police were left, bound head and foot in their own barrack, and the rebels were in the heart of the mountains.

The rage of Lacy at discovering this circumstance was extreme. The cleverness with which the feat was performed made it the subject of general conversation, and much disloyal laughter was indulged at the expense of the simple chief. After many exertions, Lacy was enabled to make the discovery that young Riordan was the contriver of this scheme, though not, ^{as} some averred, the identical prisoner who had carried it into execution.

This was the circumstance which had first compelled our hero to absent himself from home, and this was the circumstance that obliged him to use his present caution in order to avoid the risk which would attend his being generally recognised. The hatred which Lacy bore him was, he well knew,

deep, black, intense and deadly, and he paid Lacy back the full amount of his detestation, with better reason on his side, and with the addition of a world of scorn.

Riordan now stood, awaiting the arrival of David Lenigan, forming a thousand conjectures as to the nature of Miss Wilderming's answer, and walking back and forward over the withered branches, with his cloak gathered close about his person, and his eyes bent on the ground. A rustling among the boughs made him start, and he beheld David approaching, with a face which had no omen of pleasing news in its expression.

"Well, Lenigan," he said, in a hasty tone, "what answer have you from Miss Wilderming? Does she forget me altogether? or have I any thing to hope?"

David's first reply was a troubled look and a deep sigh.

"Speak, speak, man! If you have evil news,

David, I know how to bear it. I have been used to dissappointments of the kind."

"Tell me, masther Frank, what road did you take in comin' here?"

"The road from Roundwood to be sure."

"An' what sighths did you see on the way?"

"I saw" said Francis, turning pale and speaking faintly, "a carriage and servants with white favours."

"Ah, but that was comin' from the house?"

"It was."

"She was not in it, sir. I didn't spake o' that. Did you see nothin' going the road to the lakes?"

"Not I. There was no other carriage of any kind—there was, ha! mighty justice! I met a hearse!"

"A hearse with white plumes?"

"Aye!"

“Oh, masther Frank, I have no good news to tell you. Turn your face away from me, for I wouldn’t like to look at you afther what I have to say.”

Francis made several efforts to speak, but his voice failed him. At length, stooping down and grasping the arm of his attendant, he said in a low voice: “Go on, my good fellow, tell me the whole at once.”

“Why then I will, masther Frank. I told you before that she was very ill, an’ so when I went to the house afther I partin’ you, I gev the paper to Mrs. Keleher, an’ I told her that an answer was expected direct. Well, she went, an’ if she did, it was’nt long afther, when I hard a screech that pierced through my two ears. I asked what was the matther? an’ I’m sure it’s too soon I got my answer. Ah, masther Frank, you never more will see that darlin’, she’s in a betther place than any this world could afford

her, although bein' a methodish, an' all."

When he had heard this speech, Francis trembled exceedingly, and remained silent and dejected for many minutes. It seemed as if he were making an effort to man himself, and avoid betraying any emotion that would show a want of fortitude. But it was impossible that such a struggle could be successful. He walked a few paces, and his knees began to shake with so much violence that he was obliged to look around for a seat. Before he could find one, the weakness encreased, and he fell senseless to the earth.

CHAPTER X.

WITH the assistance of some friends, David had his old master conveyed to his brother's little dwelling in the neighbourhood. During that night, and nearly the whole of the following day, Francis spoke not a word, and seemed to be scarcely conscious of what passed around him. He rejected all food, and delivered himself up to an extreme dejection of mind. Towards evening, however, he called Davy to his bedside and made him detail all he knew

of the circumstances attending Esther's death, which the poor fellow, hoping to alleviate his master's affliction by awakening something like an interest in his mind, recapitulated with great precision. The nurse, he said, had found her lifeless in her bed. The Damers were in the utmost distress at this event, and Richard Lacy had conducted himself, ever since, like a distracted person. While Francis listened to this last portion of the narrative, the speaker heard him ejaculate in a low whisper the words "Poor fellow!"

"That was what killed me!" said David, a few days afterwards in telling the circumstance to Mrs. Keleher, "the moment I heard him showin' pity for Lacy, I knew his heart was broke! He never will hould his head up again, says I to myself, as long as ever he lives!"

Night fell, lonely and dark, upon those dreary hills, and Francis had not yet begun to take an interest in any thing which passed

around him. David's family were all in bed, and he sat alone by the fire-side, watching, lest some sudden illness should render his assistance necessary to his master. He was just dozing in his hay-bottomed chair, and dreamed that he was holding a controversy with Aaron Shepherd, when he felt a hand press lightly upon his shoulder, and a voice whisper in his ear some words that his fancy construed into a different meaning :

“ Wake, David, wake ! I want you ! ” said the voice.

“ I don't mind that a brass farthin',” murmured David, through his sleep, “ I read the Doway Testament, with note and comment, an' I take the church for my guide, not a man like Martin Luther, that was instructed by the divil himself. Does'nt he own to it, in his books ? A' howl your tongue now, Aaron. One time or another you'll know the thruth o' what I'm tellin' you, an' dhrop your convartin'.”

“ Hush ! David, David ! ”

“ A’ dhróp your convartin’, man, I tell you again. Sure you know in your heart that if there was no thruth in it, ’twould be found out in the coorse o’ fifteen hundred years.”

Here he felt his shoulder shaken with a degree of force which compelled him to awake. Looking up, he beheld Francis Riordan, pale even to ghastliness, standing at his side, dressed, and with his cloak around him.

“ Masther Francis, is it you, sir ? Oh, what made you get up ? ”

“ Be still, David. Are your friends in bed ? ”

“ They are, sir.”

“ Hush, speak low ! ” whispered Francis, “ do you know the cottage where we used to watch for the wild duck ? ”

“ At the foot of Derrybawn ? ”

“ Aye, aye, upon the flat ; is it occupied at present ? ”

“ There’s no one living there, sir, now.”

“It is very well:” said the young man. “Will you tell me now where they have buried Esther?”

David remained for some minutes staring on his master in great astonishment.

“My good fellow,” said the latter, observing him pause, “this tale of yours has almost broken my heart. I was so sure of happiness, when I was returning to Ireland, that I find it almost impossible to sustain this disappointment. I think it would be some consolation to me if I could see Esther, once again, even in her grave.”

David started back in his seat, and gaped upon the young soldier in mingled awe and wonder.

“Make no noise, but answer me:” said Francis. “Is she buried in the vault of the Damers?”

“’Tis there she is, sir, surely, returned David, “in the Cathedhral at Glendalough.”

“It is enough,” said his master. “Come then, David, arise and follow me down to the Seven

Churches. Alive or dead, I must see Esther Wilderming once more."

David arose, still half stupified with astonishment.

"Have you got any instrument" said Francis, "with which we may remove the stones from the mouth of the tomb?"

This mention of an instrument placed the undertaking for the first time in all its practical horror before the eyes of David.

"Oh, masther Francis!" he said "go into your bed, sir, an' don't be talkin' o' these things. Let the dead rest in peace! When we bury our friends, we give 'em back into the hands of the Almighty that gave 'em to us, to bless an' comfort us in this world, an' he tells us that he'll send his own angel to wake them up when his great day is come. Let us lave them, then, where they lie, silent an' cold, until that thrumpet sounds, an' not presume to lay an unholy tool upon the house of the dead!"

“ Be silent,” said Francis, with a tone which had something in it of peculiar and gloomy sternness. “ Come not between the shade of Esther Wilderming and me. Whatever was her thought of me when living, she now must know my heart, and I am sure that her spirit will not grieve to see me as a visitor in her midnight sepulchre. You tell me that her face was changed by sorrow and by sickness, I wish but to behold it. It was almost the only sight on earth that could have made it worth a residence, and a people disenthralled and happy. It is gone from me, now, for ever, and except I seek her in her tomb, I have lived and hoped in vain. Ah, shall a few feet of earth hide Esther from my gaze, after I have come o’er half the world to look upon her? Arise, and obey me !”

David dared not reply, but, taking his hat, went with his master into the open air. He brought with him a pick-axe, used by a relative who worked at the lead-mines on the neigh-

bouring hills, and followed his master in silence.

Before they had walked many hundred yards, the Valley of the Seven Churches opened upon their view in a manner as lonely and beautiful as it was impressive. The moon, unclouded by a single wandering mist, shed its pale blue light upon the wild and solemn scene. Before them, on a gently undulating plain, stood the ruins of the Churches, with the lofty round tower which flung its shadow, gnomon-like, along the grassy slope. A few trees waved slowly to and fro in the nightwind. The shadows of the broken hills fell dark upon the streaked and silvery surface of the lakes, hiding half the watery expanse in gloom, while the remainder, broken up into diminutive wavelets of silver, rolled on, and died upon the shore with gentle murmurs. One side of the extensive chasm in which the lakes reposed was veiled in shade. On the other the moonlight shone over tumbling masses of granite

and felspar, and glimmered bright on countless points that sparkled with mica and hornblende. A moaning wind came downward, by the ruins, and seemed like the voice of the dead, heard thus at night in their own silent region.

Far on their left, overhanging the gleamy water, appeared that precipitous cliff, beneath the brow of which the young Saint Kevin hewed out his dizzy resting place. The neighbouring legends say, that, in his early days, the Saint resided at the beautiful lake of Luggela, described in a former chapter, where he was first seen and loved by the fair Cathleen, the daughter of a chieftain in that country.

Nearer, and also on the left, stood the Cathedral, which was more especially the object of young Ricrdan's search at this moment.

“ Pass on,” he said to his attendant, “ and see if there be any body loitering among the ruins.”

Lenigan obeyed, and Francis remained gazing on the gentle acclivity on which the ivied walls of the old church were standing. The burial-ground, with its lofty granite crosses, and its white head-stones glistening in the moon-shine, lay within a short distance. "O earth!" he said, within his own mind, as he looked musingly upon those slight memorials of the departed, "O earth, our mother and our nurse, you are kinder to us than our living friends. You give us life at first, and you supply us with all that can make life sweet, while we retain it. You furnish food for our support, raiment for our defence, gay scenes to please our sight, and sounds of melody to sooth our hearing. And when, after all your cares, we droop, and pine, and die, you open your bosom to receive and hide us from the contempt and loathing of the world, at a time when the dearest and truest amongst our living friends

would turn from our mouldering frames with abhorrence and dismay !”

A slight signal, given by Davy Lenigan, here interrupted the meditation of the young man, and he proceeded to the church with a rapid, but firm step. He found David standing before the monument of the Damers with the pickaxe in his hand.

“Lenigan,” said he, “there is one thing that I have forgot. Return to the deserted cottage, of which we were speaking, light up a fire, and make a pallet of some kind, for I will not go back to your house to-night.”

David gazed on his master for some moments in deep perplexity and awe.

“For the sake of glory, masther Francis,” he said in a beseeching tone, “what is it you mane to do this night ? I’m in dhread, you’re thinkin’ o’ doin’ something on this holy ground that is’nt right.”

“Ask no questions,” replied Francis, in a

gloomy voice, "but do as you are commanded. Lose no more time, for the moon is sinking low, and the dawn may overtake us before we have done half what I intend."

David obeyed in silence, and Francis sat down on the headstone of some poor tenant of the grave-yard, expecting his return, and thinking of Esther.

A quarter of an hour had scarcely passed, when Lenigan returned, and they proceeded to remove the stones from the mouth of the sepulchre. A sudden wind, rushing through the aperture, blew chill upon the heated frame of the young lover, and made him shiver in all his limbs before he ventured to descend.

"What was that cry?" he said, suddenly starting.

"What cry, sir? I heard nothing."

"Not now?"

"Oh, now I do. 'T is nothin', sir, only the

owl in the Round Tower, or, may be, the eagle that's startled in Lugduff."

"It must be so," replied Riordan, "but I thought it had almost a human sorrow in its shrillness. 'Tis strange, how soon our senses become the slaves of our passion, and flatter it with strange compliances, giving its colour to the sights, and its tone to the sounds, by which we are surrounded. How dark the vault is! So—and after all, and all, 'tis here that I must visit Esther!"

"Is it any thing he seen, I wondher," muttered David to himself, observing him pause and hesitate. "I hope an' thrust it is afeerd his gettin'."

But he hoped in vain. In a few minutes, Francis shook off his mood of meditation, and entered the mouth of the tomb, creeping along upon his hands and feet. Lenigan, who feared lest he might do himself a mischief, hurried after, and found him seated at the bottom

of a flight of stone steps which ascended from the floor of the vault, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, and his face buried in his hands. On hearing Lenigan's voice, he started up, as if from a reverie, and uncovering the lanthorn which he had concealed beneath his cloak, the vault became illuminated on a sudden.

“Take this cloak,” said Francis, unclasping it from his throat, and handing it to his bewildered companion—“take this cloak, and hang it up before the opening, lest any one should see the light from without.”

The attendant complied, and Francis proceeded to examine the lids of the coffins which were piled on all sides around the gloomy apartment.

“Was it by her own desire,” said the young man, in a low and reverential voice, “that Esther was buried here, in the vault of the Damers?”

“ It was, sir,” returned David, who almost trembled with fear. “ Dear knows, masther Frank, this is no place for us to be talkin’ this time o’ night. Do whatever you have to do, an’ come away, an’ the heavens bless you, sir !”

Without returning any answer, Francis proceeded to examine the coffins with the open lanthorn. His attendant followed him with his eyes, as he read the inscriptions on the coffin-plates aloud, and observed him shrink and look still more ghastly when any denoted that the inhabitant was a female who had died young. One observation only David heard him make while he passed the light over the rich decorations and silver mounting of the coffins.

“ I told you, I believe,” said he, “ that I am now wealthy. Lest I should forget to mention it in my will, take care after my death that I am buried in a plain coffin.”

“ Afther your death, masther Frank, a’ ragal !” exclaimed David, in a terrified voice.

“ Yes,” said Francis, “ if you should survive me. Ah, heaven, what ghastly foppery is this !”

He passed on, and came at length to a plain coffin, before which he paused, and began to tremble exceedingly. On the lid was a silver plate with the words, “ ESTHER WILDERMING, AGED 21 YEARS,” engraved upon it. He remained for some time motionless, like one in a fit of deep musing, and then sunk down at once, utterly bereft of consciousness, upon the coffin lid.

CHAPTER XI.

THE alarm of David, at seeing his master thus lying insensible in the vault of death, was at its height. He hurried to the side of the unhappy youth, endeavoured to arouse him into life, and manifested the utmost distress at the difficulty he found in reviving him.

“ Masther Frank ! ” he exclaimed, “ rouse yourself up, sir, an’ let us come away ! Masther Frank, I say ! awake, stir again ! O, that I might’nt sin but he’s dead an’ gone, an I’m done

for! Masther Frank, again! He's dead an' gone, an' the neighbours 'll come, and they 'll catch me here, an' they 'll say I murthered him, an' I'll be hung, an' kilt, an' spoilt, an' murther't, an'—O Davy Lenigan, Davy Lenigan, an' warn't you the foolish man, to be said by him at all this holy night?"

A long deep moan, from the unhappy young man, cut short his anxious soliloquy, and occasioned David to redouble his attentions. In a few minutes Francis was again in full possession of his senses.

He took the pick-axe from the earth, and was about to deal a blow upon the fastening of the coffin lid, when Davy ventured to arrest his arm.

"Why do you hold me?" said Francis, looking on him with an eye in which sorrow strove with anger, "let go my arm, and stand aside."

"No, masther Frank, forgive me, I can't, now, I wont let you do that."

“ Let go my arm,” repeated Francis, with a faint effort to free himself.

“ You’re not right in your mind now, masther Francis,” said the faithful fellow, “ an’ you’d do something that’s not right by the corpse an’ coffin.”

“ Again, stand back and free me.”

“ I dar’nt do it, sir.”

“ Hold off, stand away, then,” cried Francis springing up and hurling his companion back among the coffins with a strength which fury only could supply, “ Hold off ! or, as I live and suffer, I’ll dash your brains out ! Impudent man ! whose corse do you talk of ? Hers ! you are very bold, to think that I would harm her ! Hold back, and touch me not, nor speak, nor move, nor breathe aloud, or I will ease my agony upon you ! Avoid me then, if you suppose me mad, and do not tempt the fury of a breaking heart. Mad ? Aye, indeed, and drearly insane too ; a burning madness ; lunacy with consci-

ousness ; the madness of the heart and the affections, that makes the bosom one wild Bedlam of frantic uproar and affliction, while the soul is able to look upon the tumult with all the exquisite pain of perfect consciousness ! This is my torture now, though you perceive it not. Oh, that my brain would burst ! Good heaven, forgive me if I sin ! ”

He uttered the last sentence in a tone of piercing anguish, and then sunk down as if the fit of passion had exhausted him.

“ Let us cease this indecorous loudness,” he said, after some time, “ it becomes neither the place nor the occasion. I have wasted too much time already. Interrupt me no more.”

“ Indeed, masther Frank, I meant no offence in life, only to hinder you of doing now what you might be sorry for another time.”

“ Good fellow ! my good, faithful fellow, forgive me ! I am sure of it ; you are a good and honest servant, and broken-hearted as I am, and forgetful of all earthly things, I will remember that

for you before I die. But do not cross me, Davy, in these fits. I don't know how or why it is, but I feel that I have lost all government of my own nature since this dreadful accident. My brain is changing, moment after moment, and pain and passion come and go again without my intervention, or even my knowledge. Now, my heart is dull as lead, my head swims, my nerves are all insensible, and I think my suffering is at an end. And presently, a sudden fancy strikes upon my heart, and shoots like fire into every member of my frame, and thrills my nerves, and stabs my brain to the quick, and makes me, for the time, a maniac !” He pressed his clenched hand against his temples, and stamped against the earth like one in exquisite suffering. “ I only wish,” he continued, in a more moderate tone, “ to look upon the face of Esther for once, and then we will leave the vault together.”

David dared not to offer even a word of remonstrance, but looked on in awe-struck silence,

while his master, with some exertion, succeeded in striking up the lid from the coffin. The perfume of some balmy extracts, which were scattered in the shroud, diffused a sudden air of sweetness throughout the damp and gloomy charnel.

“It is very strange!” said Francis, in a broken whisper, while large drops of agony like those which are said to be wrung from a wretch upon the rack, glistened and rolled downward from his brow and temples. “It is very strange! How long is it now since Esther died?”

“Betther than two days, sir, very near the third night now.”

“It is very strange, indeed. Here is not the slightest change upon the face. Ah, death! It is as cold as iron!”

He raised the head gently, between his hands, imprinted a reverential kiss upon the forehead, and then drew back a little to gaze

at leisure on the face. It was extremely beautiful; and, owing, perhaps, to the peculiar light, seemed almost to have retained some shade of the carnation, to which, in life, it owed so much of its loveliness. The sight produced at length a salutary effect upon the blasted affections of the young lover, the tears burst from his eyes, and he leaned forward over the corpse, in a mood of gentle and heart-easing grief.

After some time, he rose again, and bade Davy to come nearer.

“Answer nothing, now,” said he, “to what I shall propose, but obey me, at once, and without contradiction. I am going to take Esther from this vault, and to bury her near that cottage.”

“Oh, murther! murther!”

“Peace, and do not breathe a word, but prepare directly to assist me. Replace the coffin lid, when I have taken her up; be speedy and be silent.

He raised the body with tenderness, laid it across his bosom, with the head resting on his shoulder, and signified that his attendant should close the coffin. This being done, and the cloak removed from the mouth of the sepulchre, he once more clasped it on his throat, and drew it close around the lifeless form which he bore in his arms. Stooping low with his burthen, he ascended the flight of steps already mentioned, and passed out into the air.

“ Oh, vo ! ” murmured David to himself, “ that I may be blest, but the gallows will be our portion for our doin’s this night.”

He followed his master, and they hurried out of the churchyard, passing beneath the ruined archway on the northern side, and down the slope which led to the common road.

His long abstinence, and the exhausting nature of the passions with which he had contended, had so far enfeebled the frame of the young sol-

dier, that it was with difficulty he bore the corpse along. His attendant, who beheld him falter, ran hastily after, and endeavoured to prevail on him to deliver the burthen to his care, but Francis would as soon have parted with his life. An unexpected assistance, however, presented itself.

When they came to the stile, which led to the road, they found a man standing near a horse and cart, which was half filled with straw.

“Is that masther John?” he asked in a low voice.

“Have you all ready?” answered Francis, without hesitation.

“All ready sir ; pruh ! tumble it in, sir, at once, an’ let us be off. Faix, you wor’nt long. Tumble it in, sir, for I hear the police is out with Misther Lacy, the magisthrate, in these parts. It will set us to be in town before day.”

Francis got into the car, still holding the

corpse in his arms, and they drove up the road without speaking. When they had arrived at the turn which led to the cottage so frequently alluded to, Francis laid a strong hold upon the man, and bade him in a low voice to stop the cart.

“Go down again,” said he, “and wait for master John. Stir, speak, move, raise hand or voice to cross me, and I will shoot you through the brains.”

He drew a pocket pistol from his bosom and descended from the cart. The man stood stupified, looking on, while Francis gathered the shrouded figure once more into his arms, and then cantered down the hill, apparently not displeased to be rid of so fiery a companion.

When the cart was out of sight, Francis hurried up the narrow lane which led to the cottage, and was followed by Davy, whose mind was now completely bewildered by the accumulation of terrors and mysteries which he had undergone.

“The Sack-’em-ups !” he exclaimed gazing down the road, in the direction of the Seven Churches. “The plundherin’ Sack-’em-ups ! An’ sure, what betther are we ourselves this holy night afther takin’ the lady from her people ? O mother, mother ! its little you thought that any o’ your children would ever turn out a Sack-’em-up, to disgrace his parentage !”

They entered the cottage, where the fire was already burning cheerfully upon the hearth. Having carefully closed the door, and made it fast behind them, they proceeded to arrange the body on a wide form, which was placed near the fire side, and the lanthorn was hung up, so as to shine full upon the lifeless features.

“There she lies, at last !” said Francis folding his arms and looking down on the dead face, “there now lies Esther Wilderming, the young, the gay, the lovely, and the virtuous ! An old woman told me, once, that I

had been overlooked in my infancy, and I am almost superstitious enough to credit her. Otherwise, why should it be that there, where my best affections have been centred and my keenest hopes awakened, there I have been ever sure to undergo a disappointment? But I have snatched her out of Lacy's arms, and even this dismal meeting has a consolation compared with that appalling rumour of her falsehood. Esther! dear Esther, I forgive you, now. How beautiful she was! *Was!* Oh, that word has death in its sound for me. For your sake, Esther, I will lead an altered life from henceforth. I never will hope more, not even for the natural blessings that go and come with the revolving year, for I think, if anything could shorten the liberal hand of Nature, and cause her to withhold her ancient customary bounties, it would be the longing of a wretch like me. I never more will dress, game, play, sing, laugh, or mingle in the

gaeties of earth. My dream of death is out; my plans of quiet and domestic joy entirely baffled. In war, in peace, in action, or repose, in mirth, or in musing, I never more can know a happy feeling; never indeed, oh, never! never! never!"

He sunk down, utterly exhausted by grief, fatigue, and want of food, by the side of the corpse, the fire light shining dusky red on the pale and delicate lineaments of the dead, and on the no less pale and haggard aspect of the living who lay near. David lay stretched at a distance on a heap of fresh straw and rushes, offering up many prayers, and unable to conceive what would be the result of this extraordinary vigil.

CHAPTER XII.

LET us, for the present, leave them watching, and return to Richard Lacy, whose distraction at the death of Esther has been already adverted to.

He had loved this beautiful girl as intensely as a man is capable of loving, who is likewise occupied by the two dissimilar passions of hatred and ambition. And perhaps his disappointment was now the more intolerable, as the whole three, his love for Esther, purely

and honestly for her own sake, his detestation of Riordan, and his general ambition, might be all directly or indirectly gratified by the projected marriage. The expression of his grief, in consequence, partook of the desolation of thwarted love, the fury of baffled vengeance, and the agony of disappointed ambition. His own domestics feared to approach him in his chamber, in which he had shut himself up immediately after his return from the funeral.

“The plagues of Egypt on the boyish passion!” he exclaimed, “that will not let me rest! Why, curse of my heart! what is she now to me, that I should pule and grieve about her? Down with these damning pangs!” [he stamped fiercely upon the floor] “and let me think. Up! Lacy, be a man, and let her go! Look to the future. Up! what have you lost? You’ve drawn your bolt, and shot, and missed your mark, and must not waste

your life in looking after the lost shaft. The quiver's full, and the world is young yet. Up! The stoutest wrestler may endure a fall, and rise again, well-breathed, and live and conquer! Despise this weakness, and think you are born for higher things than to sit down and pine over a piece of painted earth!" He paused on the sudden, and leaned forward on the table, his temples resting between his open hands and his eyes fixed in abstraction. Beautiful! beautiful!" he murmured more gently, as the pale sweet face came slowly forward and acquired almost the distinctness of reality in his imagination. "I could not at first avoid loving her, and I cannot now forbear to sorrow for her death. Ah, bear with me, Ambition, for a while! Beautiful, gentle, gay, kind, modest, graceful, talented, accomplished, where is her likeness to be found on earth? Well, soar at what point I will, there I am struck. One happiness, at least, I never can enjoy, the quiet

bliss of a domestic life ; that, and the triumph over Riordan's memory. She is gone to meet him !" Here he sprung up, and struck the table in a paroxysm of fury. " If there's another life, and sure I cannot think her all destroyed, she is now at Riordan's side !" He paused a moment, and burst into a fit of laughter at the wildness of his own fancy. " But that," he continued, " made a part of my happiness. I hated him, and I would have given half the world to take that vengeance on him even in his grave."

A timid knock at the door interrupted his passionate soliloquy.

" Who's there ?" he asked, in a furious tone.

" Nobody, only Nancy Guerin, sir," replied a gentle voice.

" What do you want ? Quick, tell me your business, and be gone. Who wants me ?"

" Nobody, only Mr. Tobin, sir. He wishes to know would you let him up here."

“Curse, plague on him and you! what does he mean? What does he want?”

“Nothing sir, I believe, only—”

The sound of a loud, rattling voice like, that of one highly excited by strong drink, was at this moment heard upon the staircase, and cut short the projected speech of the young servant. The accent had something in it of more refinement than is usual in the humbler classes, but was yet far too broad to let it be supposed that the speaker actually filled the rank of a gentleman.

“Let me alone for finding him,” said he, as he ascended, rather unsteadily, “I leave announcements to my cousins and the family. Tom Tobin’s own honest face was the best letther of introduction he ever carried about him. I’ll let announcements alone until I can sport a carriage. Lacy!” he continued, putting his hands to his sides, throwing his head back and roaring out at the top of his voice. “Lacy, my boy! my lad! my hero! Lacy, my prince of

papists, here's honest Tom Tobin come to see you !”

“ The plague of Egypt and of all the fiends ! what shall I do ?” cried Lacy, in an agony of rage and suffering.

“ Will I call Owen, sir, to stop him ?”

“ Call death ! call Lucifer ! call—— Ah, good Tobin, you are welcome,” he added, changing his tone, as Tobin’s gaunt and ill-dressed figure came in sight. “ Welcome, although you find me in a mournful hour.”

He drew him in, and shut the door.

“ Sorry for your troubles, misther Lacy, but those are misfortunes that all must look for in the coorse o’ nature.”

“ Sit down ; I thank you, Tobin. We must all die.”

“ It stands to raison we should,” returned Tobin, endeavouring to look sober, “ the highest and the lowest must go, they must quit, tramp, march ! that’s the chat ! My cousins an’ the

family have no more a lase o' their lives than honest Tom Tobin himself. There's my comfort. They must all cut their sticks, when the rout comes—off, in a pop! Well, so as one has a decent funeral, all is one."

"Tobin—" said Lacy.

"That's my name, the family name, a family I never was ashamed of yet. I wish they could say the same o' me, but that would set 'em. I was always a blackguard; good-for-nothing but idleness and vice, just a fit tool for such a knave as you, but a better descended gentleman never swung upon the gallows."

"Good Tobin, I am busy—"

"They talk of my drinking and swearing and licentiousness. Very well, I admit it. But look at poor Owen. There's a pattern of piety and good conduct! Owen never wronged a human being of a sixpence. He never was heard to utter a prophane or a licentious speech. He is as constant in his attendance at chapel as

if he was coorting the mininster's daughther, and he never was (to say) drunk in his life. There's my pride. I pick pride out o' that. Is there a man in the country can show me such a cousin as that."

"Tobin—"

"Shabby? Psha, I admit it, I never had any taste for dress in my life—but look at Bill! He mounts the best cut coat in Grafton Street. There's my pride. He come down here last year, and I borrowed his coat to get one made by Speirin, the tailor, on the same cut. He looked at it, folded up the coat, and gave it back into my hands: Sir' says he, there is'nt two tailors in Ireland that could make such a coat. I'm sorry to lose your cūstom, but there's no use in my promising what I can't do.' There's my pride. I pick pride out o' that."

"Deservedly, Tobin. Pray, hear me now."

"East or west, north or south, right, left, where will you find such a family, just putting myself out of the question?"

“Aye, aye, but hear me—”

“And for elegance—look at this. I won’t boast, but my cousin Dick is no clod. That I’ll say for him.”

“You’re drunk, sir!” said Lacy, angrily.

“Eh? well, an’ what if I am. That’s more than Owen would be, I never saw a cousin o’ mine drunk before dinner in my life.”

“You are rude.”

“Ha, that’s more than you could say of Dick. That’s a finished gentleman.”

“Hear me.”

“I pick no pride out o’ myself. I know what I am.”

“Fool, madman, knave and drunkard!” cried Lacy, stamping in a paroxysm of rage.

“Aye, aye, go on, go on! I don’t mind what you can say of me.”

“Beggar that you were when I first met you, do you not owe me all that you possess?”

“*Ecce signum!*” returned Tobin, holding

out his arms, and turning his person round, so as to expose his mean dress.

“Did I not find you a tall, hungry rogue living from town to town upon the sale of policies of assurance ? ”

“ A good trade, too, aye ! ”

“ And with assurance enough, yourself, to stock a whole inn.”

“ Ha, ha, ha ! that’s a witty pun.”

“ And hear me, fool ! and fear me. Can I not make you, now, the beggar, the spendthrift prodigal you were, again, at my pleasure ? I have the power ; do not arouse the will, or as that light shines on us, I will send you back once more to raise blood-money upon that crazy heap of bones that carries you, and think it high feeding to sit in the chimney corner, at the sign of the Shamrock, and cook a raw potatoe in the turf ashes.”

“ My cousins and the family— ”

“ Plague take your cousins ! with you— ”

“ Softly, good friend Lacy, tread tenderly on

that ground, if you please. If you want any body to abuse, I'm your man. Here I am. Abuse me, scold me, beat me, kick me, if you please, but let my cousins alone. A passing kick or a thump I'll wink at as soon as another, but there's *raison* in all things. I'll not stand any reflections on the family."

"You rascal, I will kick you out of the house."

"You're not the size, yet."

"I know why you do this. You think me in your power; but you're a fool."

"Do you defy me, then?" cried Tobin, looking earnestly on him.

"You're a fool!" said Lacy, avoiding his eye.

"Do you defy me?"

"What brought you here to-day?"

"Defy me, if you dare!"

"What do you want?"

"'Tis well you changed that word," said Tobin, relaxing his tone with a half-contemptuous smile, "you were partly beginning to forget

yourself. But all is one. I came here for money."

"I cannot give it, Tobin. You have drawn my wealth, as a leech draws blood, already. I have none to give you now."

"I don't want to get your gold for nothing," returned the other, "I have got a piece of paper, here, that is worth a few sovereigns at all events."

Lacy's eyes sparkled.

"What's that?" he said eagerly, "information about the Hares?"

"No, nor the foxes either. If I know any thing of your heart, there is a word upon this paper that will make it bound a little. Who do you think is alive?"

"Esther Wilderming!" shrieked Lacy, springing to his feet, raising his clasped hands and shaking in every limb, while his features glowed and quivered, and his eyes shone wildly, with the sudden expectation. Before Tobin answered, however, the folly of this idea became visible to his judgment, and he sunk down into

his chair in a fit of exhaustion as sudden as the excitement. "Ah, curse!" he said; it is not possible?"

"Guess again!" said Tobin, coolly.

"My wit is out." Returned Lacy with a ghastly look. "Pray, have some mercy on me. Whom do you mean?"

"Young Riordan, the paythriot."

"Riordan!"

"Francis Riordan."

Lacy shrunk back in his seat, like a snail into its shell, and remained for a short time in an attitude so contracted that his naturally diminutive stature was reduced to one half. A long deep silence ensued.

"I am still more wretched than I thought," he muttered at length, while his dark eyes flashed sullen fire upon the informer. "Esther is dead, and Riordan lives and triumphs!—The spring tide of my fortunes is upon the fall. My spirits will begin to sink at last."

“ But what if Riordan should return, and place himself within your power ?”

Lacy’s eyes gleamed gladness at the suggestion, but he did not long continue to look pleased. “ No, no,” he murmured, “ he is far too wise to set his foot again on Irish soil. He cannot think me so forgetful.”

“ He has done it, for all that.”

“ Done what ?”

“ He is here in Ireland ; here in the county Wicklow.”

The agitation which Lacy manifested at this intelligence was excessive. His countenance changed colour, and his frame trembled with anxiety. The hurried eagerness, which was visible in all his manner, resembled, but in a far more intense degree, that of a fowler who sees his victim just hovering about the springe which he has laid for its destruction.

“ Good Tobin !” he said, “ good, trusty fellow, how do you know this ? Mock me no

now with any false report ; say it not rashly, if you love my peace ! If this be false," he stamped with fury on the floor, " if I be mocked, I'll hang you like a dog ! "

" Softly, softly, sir," said Tobin, " that's a game that two could play at. But there's no occasion for us to sit down to it, at present, while there's better sport in hand for both. Do you know his writing ? "

" Whose ? Riordan's ? Aye, as I should know his face. My desk is full of his accursed and insulting letters. I could not be deceived ; what's this ? "

Tobin, handed him a paper which he endeavoured to read, but his agitation would not suffer him to hold it steady. He held it with both hands—sat down—stood up—and at length was compelled to place it on the table and support his temples on his hands while he read.

It was a pencilled note which contained the following words:

“ ESTHER—I am here, again in Ireland, the same in heart as when I left it, four years since ; If your’s have not been changed, say when and where we are to meet.

FRANCIS RIORDAN.”

Lacy went to his desk, took out several letters and compared the handwriting with that which he had just read.

“ ’Tis clear !” he exclaimed, at length ; “ there is no doubt of this—how did you get it ?”

“ My cousin Owen—”

“ Psha !—hang—”

“ Hold, sir, soft words, I say again. My cousin Owen was at Damer’s on the night of the wake, and he got it from one of the servants, who had found it in Mrs. Keleher’s apartment. You know she was Riordan’s nurse ?”

“ She was—aye—well ?”

“ Well—that is all.”

“ And you know nothing of the time nor place

in which it was written. Tell me the whole, at once. Rack me not with delay. Remember how he rose against me once ; remember how he crossed me, and indulge my vengeance with a speedy answer. Bring me upon him ; swiftly, secretly, get him into my gripe, and you shall be my brother from that hour, and share the half of what I own."

"Give me a handsome airnest first, and I'll see what I can do."

"Here is five pounds ; speak, now, where is he ?"

"Pooh, pooh !" said Tobin, "you talk to me as if I was a magician or a conjuror. I cannot now tell you where he is : but I will make it out."

"Do, and I'll make you rich."

"Say no more, say no more. But, do you wish, now, to prevent a shame from bein' put upon the grave of Esther Wilderming ?"

“What say you?” cried Lacy, with a vacant look.

“I say the sack-’em-ups are likely to have a houl’t of her before morning, if you don’t look sharp.”

Lacy shrunk back into an attitude of deep horror.

“Who told you this?” he asked in a low whisper; “but why do I stop to question it? Up, and away! Oh, Esther! oh, my love! my bride!”

“And as for Riordan—”

“Put him before my eyes, that I may blast him! No more till then—”

“’Tis better watch the whole night near the grave—”

“An age, an age, to keep my Esther’s clay from harm, to keep the silence of her tomb inviolate. Who dares to wake an echo in the chamber where she sleeps? I’ll be her sentinel

and guard her slumbers. Oh, that I could lie down and die beside her !”

“ To-morrow, I’ll go look—”

“ For Riordan? Good! I hate him! I hate him, Tobin!—I—” Here he raised himself a tiptoe, lifted his clenched hands, while his eyes seemed starting forth, his whole countenance swelled and glowed and quivered with the bursting passion, and he flung himself forward upon the table with extreme violence, repeating for the third time, with a hoarse terrific energy—I hate him !”

“ I take your word for it,” said Tobin, “ but there’s no time to be lost now, if you choose that Miss Wilderming should rest in peace.”

“ It is true !” said Lacy, hastily, “ I will go at once and make all ready in the yard.—Or go you down, and get the horses ready. Ah, Tobin, I believe my heart is broken; but let my hate be gratified in the destruction of that man, and I will die in peace. I have lived these many

years for those two passions—my hate, and love. In one, I am for ever disappointed ; but let me be successful in the first, and I am happy.—I have not lived in vain if Riordan perishes—perishes in the contempt and shame which I have prepared for him. Away, and do as I have said.”

Tobin left the room.

“ That villain !” said Lacy, changing his manner, and shaking his clenched hand after the informer, “ that villain dares to threaten. It is well the fool will let his secrets out. He has taught me caution, and I’ll teach him silence ! My brain is so confused by all these accidents, that I can scarcely know what I am about. First, Esther’s grave—(ah ! torment of my soul !)—then Riordan—(may the airs of his native land breathe poison in his throat !)—and then this insolent fool !—Quit of these two, my limbs are all unfettered once again, and free for action. Well, Tobin, are you ready ?”

“ All is right,” answered Tobin, re-entering the room. “ I have told them to make the horses ready.”

“ Come, then, at once, put these pistols in your holster.”

“ But won't you hear the information about the Hares ? ”

“ Psha ! let them pass. When we are laying a trap for a lion, we must not arrange to watch for conies.”

CHAPTER XIII.

IT happened that, on the night on which Francis Riordan had removed the body of Esther from its grave, a number of young gentlemen had left a city, not far distant, on professional business. They arrived at the churchyard while Francis was in the tomb, and left their carman on the road, where, as the reader is already aware, he was met by the young soldier, and led into a natural error.

On his return, down the hill, he found the whole company in confusion.

“ Pull up ! ” said one figure in a drab coat, standing on the stile, “ Where have you been ? ”

“ Is that misther John ? ” asked the man, in a frightened tone.

“ It is. Why did you leave the place ? ”

“ No, but is it yourself in airnest, masther John, for I axed the same question of another, a while ago, an’ he made me the same answer, an’ sure there was sorrow word o’ truth in it.”

“ Speak low, or you will call the country about us. Well, Tom, what now ? Are they coming ? ”

“ Oh, oh, John ! ” exclaimed a second figure, apparently younger and slighter than the other, “ why didn’t you tell me what ye were coming here about ? I thought it was only to see the ruins ! Oh, it is frightful. Don’t

you remember the old woman of Berkeley?

The fiend will fetch me now in fire,
My witchcrafts to atone;
And I, who have rifled the dead man's grave,
Shall never have rest in my own."

"For shame, misther Tom," said the carman "is'nt it a sin for you to be sayin' them things? What noise is that among the graves? Oh, heaven defend us all this night!"

"Amen to that, I say. What noise do you hear?"

"I see them coming," said the figure in the drab coat. "Hold your tongue, sir, and be of some assistance, if you can."

"Oh, nothing ever horrifies me but the stripping off the shroud."

"Psha, you talk like a coward."

"Why, then, I declare, John, I am not a coward. Surely nobody can call this cowardice.

I'd meet any man in the world, in five minutes, provided he was a gentleman, and alive, but when once he loses the power to retaliate, I don't know how it is, but he grows awful. I believe the fact is, I have too much *pluck* to offer any indignity to a man who can't defend himself."

Several other figures now approached in the moonlight.

"We are done!" cried one "the tomb is broke already. The nest is rifled, and the bird is flown."

Here the carman interposed, and told of his adventure.

"I told you we should have been here earlier," said one, "That rogue, Duhig, has been here before us. No matter, I'll serve him a trick, some night when I catch him in Bully's Acre."

"Come away, lads, now; there is nothing to gain by stopping here."

“Hold your tongue, sir, or I’ll cut the ilium out of you.”

“And, then,” said another “he may cry out, like the ghost of Hector,

Troes fuimus—*Ilium* fuit.”

This jest was honoured by a roar of laughter mingled with deep groans.

“Hush! hush! lads,” said the former speaker, “we have no time to lose. Tell me is there no other job for us to do?”

“There’s an ould tythe procthor in the corner, near the cross,” said one.

“I never laid scalpel on a proctor but once, and then I lost a fine one.”

“How?”

“The fellow’s heart was ossified. I broke the blade, making an incision into the *margo obtusus*.”

“And why a proctor, now?”

“They’re such a set of bone grubbers,

their blood grows thick with the phosphate of lime."

"You're so nice in your choice of subjects," said another, "that I suppose nothing would do you but a poet, now, or a writer of romances."

"By no manner of means, good sir. I don't love blubber. *Est modus in rebus*. Those fellows are too soft by half for a young gentleman who is studying osteology. The *os frontis* is nothing but gristle, and as for the thorax, you might as well put your scalpel into a bag of oil."

"What do you say then to a Kerry papist?"

"If you take him in Easter week, it is very well. At any other time, he is no better than an exsiccated preparation of muscles and tendons."

"Yes," said a new voice, "because he has been blooded, too closely, by the Orange leeches."

“Come, come, no politics,” said another speaker, “let us leave these things to the herds of faction, to lords, to commoners, to demagogues and tyrants. Let the Fury of civil discord find her way into the camp, the church, the cabinet, the court, the bar; let her teach the cannon to roar, and make the sword blood-red upon the field; or condescend to break tea-cups at the domestic breakfast table; but let our profession, gentlemen, be superior to her insults. She has already made her way into the chancel, let it be our care to keep her out of the church-yard.”

“Hear, hear, hear!”

“Hush! hush!” cried one, “I see some figures stealing down the hill. There was a long shadow flung over the lake at this moment.”

A shower of stones, succeeded by a loud “Halloo!” that echoed from cliff to cliff, along the shores of the lake, confirmed the fears which were awakened by this speech. The

group dispersed in an instant, and fled up the road, while the carman laying on a bastinado of strokes on the crupper of his hack, cantered away like a second Phaeton. The country people followed them, to a long distance up the vale, shouting aloud, hurling stones after them, and giving many occasion to regret the state of the law, which compelled the votaries of a science so indispensable to the welfare of mankind, to resort to such modes of following up their investigations.

Very soon after the country people dispersed, Richard Lacy, and his creature Tobin, arrived in the Glen. A peasant told him of the occurrence just detailed, and he hurried on to the grave-yard, where he had to encounter a terrific disappointment. His despair and rage at finding the tomb of Esther opened, and the body gone, were almost maniacal, and even the burly Tobin had more than once a sensation of personal fear while he stood before him in his extacies of anger.

No means were left unattempted to recover the contents of the rifled sepulchre, and none were found availing. With all the bitterness of disappointment, added to his natural intensity of hatred, Lacy, at length, gave up the pursuit, and turned all his attention to the search after young Riordan.

CHAPTER XIV.

LET us return to the deserted cottage, in which we left the unhappy young patriot watching by the body of his love.

About midnight, the effect of his exertions, and long want of rest and food, began to be apparent in his frame. His sense of misery, the keenness of which had, until now, kept off the assaults of sleep, grew vague and dull, and a lulling torpor sunk upon his brain. The wind, which rose as the night advanced, moaned

sullenly around the lonely building, and a sudden falling in of the burning fire made him start from his broken slumbers, with a sensation of alarm. Sometimes, the disordered condition of his nerves, without any external excitement, would produce a similar effect, and he would suddenly find himself sitting erect upon the floor, with a horrid sensation, shooting like a galvanic shock from his brain, along his spine, and oppressing, for a moment, the action of his heart and lungs. His visions, when he dreamed, were likewise of a startling description. Now he met Lacy, hand to hand in combat, and was vexed to the soul to find that, while all his enemy's blows told fiercely on his person, his own fell weak and harmless, as if on some unresisting and impassible substance. And now, he occupied that dizzy resting place in the cliff, from which the poor Cathleen was hurled into the lake; and Esther, pale in her shroud, stood trembling on the brink beside his couch. He rose to meet

her; her form seemed to fade as he advanced, and her face looked terrible, he knew not wherefore. He attempted to touch her hand, but she receded from him, he followed to the brink of the cliff, she still seemed to float backward in the thin air, and the pale dead face and lurid eye assumed a slight appearance of derision. He tried to follow her; his footing failed him, and he fell headlong down the rocks, from ledge to ledge, and just awoke in time to save himself from some irrecoverable contusion.

He found David Lenigan standing over, and endeavouring to recal him to consciousness by gently pressing his arm.

“Masther Frank,” said this honest fellow, “that’s a quare place for you to be lying, sir. Get up, and sthretch over on the sthraw, awhile, an’ I’ll keep awake here by the fire-side, until you have a little sleep taken.”

Francis sat up, and stared upon his attendant.

“I will do so, I believe, Davy,” said he “for I am tired almost to death.”

They exchanged places, and Francis so disposed himself that he could, to the last moment of consciousness, retain a view of the form and features of the dead. The fire had sunk down, and a gloomier red was cast upon the white and marbly cheek of the maiden. Before many minutes had elapsed, Francis observed that his attendant's head had dropped upon his breast, and that his promise of vigilance was already broken. He strove, therefore, to prevent the access of slumber in his own person, and continued leaning on his elbow, and keeping his eyes fixed upon Esther.

It happened that the attitude of her head, and the mere position of the features, reminded him forcibly of the look she had worn at their parting, when the sound of the imaginary dead-bell had thrilled him with its sudden presentiment. Whatever of resentment had been awakened,

by her desertion of him in his exile, was secretly now dissolved in the recollections which this accidental circumstance revived. He thought, if Esther could be now restored to him, he would not even think of questioning her upon the subject. His heart melted, as he remembered the caresses of their early affection, he felt her sigh again at his cheek, the music of her voice upon his ear, and he sunk, all softened, down upon his couch, burying his face in his hands, and moistening them with his tears.

A low sound, like that of a deep short sigh, uttered in the house, fell suddenly upon his ear, and made him start from his incipient slumber, with a wild and tumultuous feeling of alarm. He stared confusedly all around him, but could discern nothing. He looked at the corpse, but it still lay pale and motionless in the same position in which he had, with his own hands, placed it. He gazed upon Davy, who was still fast asleep and snoring loudly. The sound, he

thought, might have been merely an intonation of Lenigan's harmonious solo; but this conjecture was rejected almost as soon as it was formed. There was something peculiar in the sound; an effect thrilling and startling, such as is said to belong properly to things of supernatural origin. He called to his attendant several times, but found much difficulty in awaking him.

"Davy," he said "did you hear anything?"

"What would I hear, masther?"

"I thought there was a sound, just now, as if from somebody in pain."

"Oyeh!" exclaimed Davy, half starting up and staring around him, with jaw dropped and eye dilated on the sudden.

Francis remained listening attentively for a few moments. "I believe I was mistaken," he said at last, "it was the wind, splitting itself upon the corner stone, or howling down the glen."

He slept again, and Davy, returning to the fire-place, with many a knowing glance at the darkened corners of the room, likewise resumed his attitude of repose. In a very short time, Francis was once more suddenly awakened from slumber by a confused noise, and the pressure of a strong hand upon his shoulder. Looking up, he beheld his adherent thrown forward on one knee, with one hand gathering his dress about his throat, and a face full of terror, turned back over his shoulder.

“What is the matter, now?” exclaimed Francis.

“The groan, achree—the groan!”

“What of it?”

“What of it, but to hear it, I did; as plain as I hear you now. Oh, that I may be grey, mather Frank, but we’re kilt an’ spoilt, alive, the two of us this blessed night. Listen to that.

“To what?”

“ I don’t know ; nothin’, I b’lieve. Oh, that I may be grey, masther, but I’ll rise out of you an’ your doin’s. ’Tisn’t this world alone, but the other along with it, you brought down upon us this night. Oh, wirra, wirra, what’ll I do at all, or what’ll ever become of us ? ”

“ Be silent,” said Francis, “ or tell me what you heard ? ”

“ A groan, I tell you ; a cry, just as a person would be gettin’ aise from a hurt, and would be moanin’ lyin’ down. That I may be grey, but I thought it is herself was come afther us, an’ I’m not misdoubtin’ of it yet either.”

“ Psha ! ”

“ Oh, aye, that’s the way, always, when I put in a word, an’ sure what hurt if I had n’t to share in what comes of it ? but there’s the way, always. I folly on everywhere, like a blind beggar man, an’ my word won’t be taken for any thing, although I must tumble into the ditch, along with the laidher, when he goes.”

“When you have done speaking,” said Francis, “will you suffer me to rise? Come hither, Davy, and let us both watch by the fire during the next two hours. It will then be dawn, and we will bury Esther together.”

“I wish to my heart she was fairly under the ground again,” returned Davy. “Oyeh, d’ye hear the rain? Well,” he added, after a pause of several minutes, “she’ll be in better luck this mornin’ than she was when she was buried the turn before.”

“Why?” Francis asked, almost involuntarily.

“Is it an’ it powerin’ rain? Sure the world knows, sir, that it is a finer thing to be buried of a showery day than of a dhry one.”

“Why?”

“Why?” echoed Davy, puzzled at being called on to give a reason for what he had hitherto never heard called in question. “Wisha, then, I don’t know, sir, only as they say, that

Happy is the bride that the sun shines on,

Happy is the corpse that the rain rains upon.

“The ould women would tell you a story, as long as to-day an’ to-morrow, about that very thing, if you’d listen to ’m; but you’re in no humour now, sir, I b’lieve, to hear stories.”

“Indeed, my good fellow, I am not,” returned Francis, in a mournful voice. “It was always my ambition rather to be the subject of a story, in my own person, than to sit me down a simple auditor, and it would seem as if Fortune had taken me at my word, and rendered mine a tragic one.”

They relapsed once more into silence, and Francis continued to recal the many circumstances of his life which justified the speech he had pronounced, until his recollections became altogether oppressive. He then suddenly turned round, and bade David to go on with his story. The latter, who felt something of security in the appearance of social communion, complied with great readiness, and related the following adventure, which, though not as

imaginative in detail as the *Divina Comedia*, may yet be interesting, as an effect of the same spirit of trembling enquiry, which filled the breast of Dante with its inspiration.

“Why then I will sir, tell you that :” said David, crossing his feet at full length and lowering his head upon his breast. “A couple, sir, that was there of a time, an’ they hadn’t only the one son, an’ plenty of every thing about ’em. Well, himself was a very good man, he never sent a beggar away empty-handed from his house, he gave clothes to the naked, and food to the hungry, an’ dhrink to the dhry, an’ every whole ha’p’orth, all to one thing alone, an’ that was that he never allowed any poor person to sleep a night inside his doore, be they ever so tired, because his wife was a terrible woman, an’ he was in dhread of her tongue. As for her, the only thing she ever gave to any one in her life was an ould tatter’d skreed of a flannel petticoat

she gave to one poor woman, an' the sheep's trotters that she used to have thrown out in the doore to 'em when they'd be crowdin' about it afther dinner.

“ Well, it so happened, as things will happen, that the man died ; an' if he did, the day he was buried, the rain keep powerin' down equal to a flood, until they had him laid in the grave. An' it is'nt long afther until the woman died likewise, an' a finer day never came out o' the sky than what she had goin' to the church-yard. Well, the son was thinkin' greatly, day an' night, about this, for he thought bettther o' the father, a deal, than the mother, an' he wondhered to say she should have all the sunshine intirely, an' he to be drownded wet, an' his people after him, berrin'. Be this, an' be that', says the boy, says he, sthrikin' the jamb o' the doore this way with the flat of his hand, I never 'll stop nor stay, says he, 'till I find out the raison o' that,

or why it should be at all,' says he. An' out he marched the doore.

"He walked a sighth that day, an' it was just about the dusk of the evenin' when he found himself in the middle of a lonesome wood, an' the sun goin' down, an' not havin' a place to turn to where he'd get shelter for the night. He went in farther an' deeper into the wood, but the farther he went the more lonesome it grew, an' a quare sort of appearance was in the air, an' on the threes, an' bushes, an' the sky, an' all about him. By an' by, there was no birds singin', nor a breath o' wind stirrin', nor a lafe movin' on the boughs, nor one thing showin' a sign of life, an' still it being the finest counthry ever you seen, only quare an' silent that way. He walked on farther an' farther, an' at last he seen a place among the threes that he thought was a church, only it had a little curl o' smoke comin' up through the boughs as if somebody was livin' there.

“ He made towards the house, an’ walked in the doore. Well, it was the finest place he ever seen in his life. There was a table laid out, an’ a fine fire in the grate, an’ all sorts o’ cookery goin’ on, an’ a hale-looking old man sittin’ near the table, preparin’ his dinner, an’ lookin’ very pleasant and happy. Well, this boy, he up and told him what he wanted a night’s lodgin’, an’ the old man made him come in, an’ sit down and tell his story, what it was he was goin’ lookin’ for, an’ afther he heerd it all: ‘ Well, do you know who is it you have there now ? ’ says the old man. ‘ I don’t,’ says the boy, ‘ how should I know you when I never seen you before ? ’ ‘ You did see me, many’s the time,’ says the old man, ‘ an’ why wouldn’t you ? I’m your father,’ says he. ‘ O murther ! ’ says the boy, ‘ see this ! ’

“ Well (not to make a long story of it,) they sat down, an’ ate their dinner. They past the evening’ talkin’, an’ when it was bed-time,

the father got up an' walked out, biddin' the boy not to mind him, an' left him alone be the fire. The night past away, an' he did'nt return, an' at last the boy got so sleepy, he said he'd thry about the place for a bed to sleep on. He made towards a door, an' opened it, an' if he did, what did he see within, only a fine feather bed an' curtains, and a terrible big dog sittin' down upon the floore, an' lookin' him straight in the face. Hardly he offered to go a foot into the room when the dog flew at him, an' was ready, I declare to you Master Francis, to tear him upon the spot. Well an' good, if he did, well became the boy, he moved backwards, an' left the place to the dog, an' took his seat again be the fire, as it might be this way, an' slep away till mornin'.

“ When the old man came in, in the mornin', ‘ Oh, then, father,’ says the boy, ‘ was'nt it a dhroll thing o' you,’ says he, ‘ to lay me in this way all night alone, without a bed to rest

upon, or a ha'p'orth, an' I so tired.' 'Ah, my child,' says the old man, 'I could not give you what I had'nt myself!' 'Why so,' says the boy, 'I thought you were in glory, father, are'nt you happy?' 'I am happy, my child,' says the old man, 'in all but the one thing, as you may see. I can never 'sthretch my limbs upon a bed, nor sleep under a roof, for ever, during duration, an' the raison is, because I never once gave a night's lodgin' to a poor man in my days on earth, an' all on account of your mother,' says he. 'Oh, father, father,' says the boy, 'an' is'nt that a poor case with you?' 'It is,' says the old man.

" 'An' I'll tell you now,' says he, 'what's the raison o' the different weather we had the time we were buried, the both of us. Your mother had a fine sunshiny day, for there was an awful judgment waiting for her, an' that was all the pleasure she was ever more to have, the light of the bright sun shinin' down upon

her coffin until they put her in the earth. An' I, for my sins, had it rainin' heavy all that day, for that was all the ill usage I was ever to receive, besides the want of a bed.' 'An' is my mother here, father?' says the boy, 'Put on your hat,' says the father, 'an' follow me.'

"He did; he went afther him into a sort of a back yard, an' there he saw his mother, sittin' down on the bare stones, an' gnawin' sheep's trotters, with nothin' on her, to shelter her old bones from the cold, but a little skreed o' flannel, the image o' the one she gave the poor woman. 'There's her fate for ever,' says the old man, 'an' the fate of all that has no charity on earth. But don't cry, my child, until you have more raison; come along, an' profit by what you see.'

"They walked on a piece, an' it was'nt long until they came to a gate, where the old man knocked a while before it was opened. They past in, an' there the boy seen a great field,

with a fog restin' low upon the ground, an' the place all still an' quiet, except that, now an' then, they could hear the cry of young childhren comin' through the fog. They went on, an' came to a well that was in the middle o' the field, an' there they saw, through the fog, a great multitude o' childhren pressing about the well, an' dhrinkin,' an' sprinklin' themselves with the wather, out o' little mugs they carried in their hands.*

“ ‘Those’ says the old man, ‘are the souls of the childhren that died without baptism,’ says he, ‘an’ here they spend their time, without sufferin’ pain or havin’ any pleasure.

“ They passed on through the field, an’ came into another, where they saw a sighth of fine ladies an’ gentlemen, walkin’ arm in arm, under the shade of trees, an’ the sun shinin,’ an’ the place

* Probably from some superstition, having the same origin as this portion of the curious, and in many instances beautiful, legend above given, the peasantry usually place a small vessel in the coffin with the body of an infant.

'adorned with flowers an' shrubs of all sorts, an' streams, an' every whole ha'p'orth, in grand houses in groves, an' music, an' laughin,' a'n dancin,' an' the best of atin' an' dhrinkin'. 'Who are these, father,' say the boy, 'that seems to agree so well, an' to live so happy?' 'They are the married people,' says the father, 'that lived up to their duty in the world, that was constant an' throe to one another in their troubles, that never changed their mind, nor looked afther other people, nor misbehaved in any one way.' 'O vo!' says the boy.

" Well an' good, they passed through that place, an' they came to another, an' as they were comin' near it, they heard the greatest wrangling an' racketin' in the world, callin' of names, an' poll-talkin,'* an' cursin' and swearin.' In they come, into a great field, an' there they seen a power o' people, men an' women, haggin'† at one another,

* Slandering, back-biting. † Scolding like old women.

an' pullin' caps, an' quarrellin' most disgraceful.' 'Allilu!' says the boy, 'father, who in the world are these?' 'They are the married people,' says the father, 'that couldn't agree upon earth, an' as they were so fond of bein' in hot wather in the world they'll have plenty of it here for evermore.'

"Well became' em, they hurried through that field, an' came to another gate where——"

CHAPTER XV.

A WILD cry, a shriek, sudden, hoarse and horrid, which burst at this moment from the lips of Francis, cut short the progress of the narrative. It was echoed, even before he could perceive the cause, by his attendant, who threw himself off his seat, and rushed in a paroxysm of terror towards the door. Stumbling, however, over some loose furniture, he fell on the straw pallet, and remained trembling, groaning and crouching downward, while he glanced with a fearful eye on the picture near the fire-place.

After the first cry of wonder and affright had burst from his lips, Francis remained rigid in the attitude into which the sudden passion had surprized him. With hands thrown back, as if in search of some support, with head put forward, with eyes full of a wild and joyous terror, he continued to stare upon the body, which began to alter fast beneath his gaze. One of the hands fell downward, and the other moved upon the bosom. One moment more, and with a heavy sigh, the lips and eyes of Esther Wilderning were visibly in motion.

“She’s risin’!” roared David, “that I migh’nt die in sin, but ’tis risin’ she is to us.”

Francis raised his hand, as if to impose silence, and continued to watch the movements of the maiden. Sigh after sigh burst from her lips and bosom; and, at length, the fringed eye-lid rose, and the watery ball became revealed and fixed upon his own.

“She lives! She lives!” cried Francis,

springing to his feet, and tossing his clenched hands above his head, while his hair stirred, his eye shone, and his whole frame shook with an ecstasy of delight. "Earth, air, and sea! she lives! O Death, I thank ye! I thank ye for this gift! My Esther, rise! Arise, my love, my life! Do you know me, Esther? Look on me, my dearest! Do you know your own Francis?"

While he spoke, he had raised her gently in his arms, and laid her head upon his shoulder. He endeavoured with caresses to awaken her to a state of perfect consciousness, but it was a long time before his efforts were in any degree successful. Some words escaped her lips, but they were either wholly unmeaning, or had reference to objects absent, and events long past: she murmured the names of her uncle, and of old Aaron.

"They are near, they are safe," said Francis, soothingly, "dear Esther, you will see them all soon."

"Is Lacy gone yet?" murmured Esther, still in a listless tone.

Poor Francis felt a little pang at this enquiry, but his affections, at the instant, were too keenly aroused to allow the entrance of so ungenerous a sentiment as that of jealousy amongst them.

“He is near you, Esther; dear Esther, you shall see him soon again,” murmured Francis, at her ear, while he again caressed her cheek, and removed the heavy grave clothes from her neck.

Lenigan had now recovered his courage sufficiently to approach his master, bearing in his hand the cloak which the latter had laid by.

“Rowl this about her, masther Frank, asthore,” he said, while his limbs trembled with affectionate anxiety, “rowl the cloak about her, the way she would’nt be frightened at the grave cloths, afther she comin’ to.”

“My honest, thoughtful Lenigan, I thank you,” returned Francis, while he wrapt the garment around the person of his love, and concealed the funereal garb, as far as it was possible.

“Masther Francis,” continued the honest attendant, “I’m thinkin’ it will be better, may be, if you lave her to myself awhile now, as she’s comin’ to, in dhread she’d be frightened when she’d see you that way of a sudden. Go into the little room, awhile, an’ when she’s herself again rightly, I’ll step over for the ould mother, or Harry’s wife, an’ bring ’em to tend her.”

Francis complied in silence, and entered the little apartment, where he overheard the following conversation between the awakening Esther and his attendant :

“Stir yourself, a-chree ! Stir yourself, Miss Esther, asthore !” said David, in a tone of comfort and entreaty. “Open your eyes an’ look about you. Here’s the masther and the misthriss, an’ Aaron, an’ all of ’em. See, here they’re comin’ in the doore ; look up, asthore, an’ bid ’em welcome.”

“O nurse, I am dying !” murmured the patient. “Where is the nurse ?”

“ Here, a’ ragal, here, at your elbow. How are you now, Miss ? ”

“ I am very well, nurse, better. Oh, my fate ! ”

“ What ails it a-chree ? What is it happened it ? ”

“ Ah, I remember you ! I know you well. What place is this ? Why am I here unattended ? ”

“ Make you mind asy, Miss, an’ I’ll be bail you won’t be long so. Here they’re all comin’ to you in the doore. Stir up now, a-chree. ”

“ I know you very well, ” said Esther, rising and looking fixedly in the face of the attendant. “ Your voice reminds me of old times, and old friends. Why are you here ? What dreary house is this ? ”

Francis now approached, from the inner room, his face concealed by his hat, and by the deep shade. He signified to David, that he should hurry away for the female attendant, and assumed, himself, the place by the side of Esther which he had occupied before. The anxious

girl stretched out her hands towards Davy when she saw him about to leave the cottage.

“ Why will you go ? Stay with me,” she exclaimed, “ where are you going ? Do not leave me here alone, and in the power of a stranger.”

“ Oh, then, Miss, if nobody ever injured you, until that stranger would do it, I’d lay my life you’d be the happiest lady on the earth.”

A deep sigh from the stranger seemed to corroborate this assurance.

“ But wherefore do you leave me ?” continued Esther.

“ To get the ould woman over, to come to tend on you, Miss. Herself, an’ myself, will be back here together in less than no time.”

He departed, and Esther sunk back again, with a moan of weariness and pain.

“ And who are you ?” she said, after a silence of some minutes, “ that are left to watch me ? ”

“ A friend,” replied Francis, in a low voice.

“ But what friend? Let me see your face. My brain is so confused that I can scarcely understand how or why I am here, or what is my condition. I know I have slumbered long, and some strange alteration has been effected in my sleep. I am not at home. I am not among my friends. Oh, speak to me, in mercy! Let me hear some sound of comfort. Where are my friends? Where am I? Who are you?”

“ One,” said Francis, still in the same deep voice, “ who was once accounted a friend, although years and sorrow have changed him.”

“ And your name?”

“ Turn this way from the door. The wind blows keenly in.”

“ I am very well. Pray, answer me.”

“ Be more concerned, young lady, for your own health, at this moment. My name is almost a forgotten sound, not worth reviving now.”

“ Be it as you will,” said Esther, “ I will

not press you. Nevertheless, I am anxious to hear it, for there is something in your voice that moves me like a recognition. You have called yourself my friend, and truly say you are forgotten now. And yet I never knew a friend whose name departed from my recollection. Others have ceased to think of me, but Heaven can witness that I was never forgetful of an early affection yet."

Francis paused in deep silence, for some moments after this speech, and then said, with a deep inspiration, and in his natural voice, "Ah, Esther! Esther!"

These words were the first that recalled the heart of Esther to the recollection of its living passions. Immediately her pulses beat freely, and all her senses acquired a vividness of perception that resembled the change from sleep to waking. And with the swift transition, came a new confusion of the intellect, and a new doubt of her position. The fire-light seemed to burn

with a brighter hue, the darkness deepened, and the strange gloom that surrounded her once more brought back the horrible idea that she had in reality changed the condition of her existence. And this impression, in itself sufficiently startling, was rendered yet more fearful by the apparition (as she believed it) of her long perished love, whose face she now beheld pale in the fire-light, and bent on her's with an expression of mingled love and reproach. While she continued to gaze upon him, gasping for breath to speak, and leaning forward on her hands, the latch of the door was raised, on the sudden, and he disappeared in the dark.

Lenigan now entered, accompanied by his brother's wife (the young mother whom the reader lately met at the school), who lifted her hands and eyes, and crossed her brow, her lips, and her bosom, at every step she made. Without any conversation worth detailing, they prevailed on Esther to suffer herself to be conveyed to the dwelling of the schoolmaster, which could afford

her means of accomodation somewhat superior to that in which she lay at present. To her inquiries respecting her late companion, they returned little more than those general and evasive answers, for which people in their rank appear to have a peculiar talent. Their humane attention during the night completely recovered her from the effect of that paroxysm of her neuralgic illness which had for so long a time left her in a trance resembling death, and had maintained the latent principle of existence for so many hours even in her coffin.

By one of those inconsistencies of passion, which are so entirely unaccountable, and which, to the unimpassioned, seem hardly credible, Francis Riordan found his feeling towards Esther change the more, the longer he lived in the conviction of her recovery. The night was passed in recalling the history of their old affection to his mind, and, with every remembrance, a feeling of deep indignation arose against his forgetful love. His

heart became, at length, so full of a mournful anger, that he refused to go and meet her in the morning, when David came to call him.

“No, Lenigan,” he said, “take her back again to her uncle, and to her love, and let her follow the inclinations of her own heart. Why should I see her? Has she not formally deprived me of all right to take an interest in her condition? I will not see her, take her home in safety to her friends.”

“Oh, then, Masther Frank, is it afther all you done, to gain a sighth of her in the dead o’ the night, and in her coffin, that you turn to now, and say you won’t look at her and she livin’? ’Tis little o’ that thought you had, when you were goin’ to knock the lid off the coffin last night with the pick-axe.”

“It was. But I have changed since then. She was then past all resentment. I could not quarrel with the piece of pale and unimpassioned mould, that lay so cold in my embrace. But

here she is alive, with all her fickleness and falsehood fresh upon her, with all her selfish passions at her heart, and I cannot forget my injuries.”

“ Ah, masther Francis, sure it is’nt in airnest you are. Erra, come away an’ see her, an’ the heavens bless you.”

“ I will not go.”

“ See this ! see this, again !”

“ She says she never yet forgot an early friendship. Ah, let that love be never counted worth the name that lies coiled up in self so utterly, that its object is by no mark of fondness, or attention, made aware of its existence. Love only can appear in the actions which it influences and inspires. Like Faith, it dies unless we show it in our works.”

“ Well then, sir,” said Lenigan, who listened to this speech with more attention than advantage. “ Listen to me now, sir, I advise you. Miss Esther has no notion of any one but yourself, for all she bein’ forced to sign

to the other man, an' take it from me, the best o' your play is to go aisy with her. If I know that lady rightly, an' I think I do, all she'd want is the wind o' the word to be off, an' to lave you in the lurch for ever, if you'd say any-thing that way. Ayeh, though bein' a methodish, she's as captious as an officer."

Plain-spoken and rough, this homely counsellor succeeded in alarming the affections of his master, and convincing him of the expediency of seeking an interview with Esther, at the least, before he came to the decision of a final parting. Accordingly he bade Lenigan to inform her, that the stranger, who had watched by her the preceding night in the cottage, was now anxious to obtain an interview.

This message revived all Esther's anxieties in an instant. She signified an immediate assent, and prepared to meet him, alone, as he desired.

"It was then, no dream," she said to

herself, with a degree of agitation similar to that which one feels at the apprehension of a supernatural visitor. "There is some news of Francis. It was no visionary face that stared upon me from the darkness, no fancied sound that called upon my name. And yet, Francis!—alive!—I must not think, until I see this stranger, or else my conjectures will hurry me beyond my sense."

She remained quiet in her chair, until Francis entered. He walked in carelessly and undisguised, as if not deeming it worth the pains to use any effort to practise on her feelings. But the sight of Esther, pale and anxious, in her seat, was too much for his offended pride. She looked piercingly on him for an instant, saw the blood gather beneath his yellow brow, and his eye-lids quiver with the wavering passion. With a cry of joy, she sprang from her place, and in an instant, was folded close into the bosom of her early friend.

“ Francis ! dear Francis ! ”

“ Oh, Esther ! my own Esther ! ”

They remained, during some moments, speechless and motionless, in the extatic attitude of reconciled affection.

But this feeling did not continue on the part of Riordan. Esther was surprised to feel herself put away from his arms, and to see him turn aside, and walk toward the window. She looked anxiously after him, and waited for some moments, in expectation of some farther movement, but he remained gazing out upon the gloomy vale in silence. She now walked slowly after, and laying her hand upon his shoulder, said :

“ Are you ill, Francis ? ”

“ No,” said he quickly, “ not in the least.”

“ What is the matter then ? You don’t look well.”

“ I am quite well ; nothing, nothing is the matter with me.”

They were silent, after this, for some moments.

“Francis,” said Esther, “there is something on your mind. Why do you not speak to me?”

“Me! Esther.—Have I not spoken to you? Have I shown no joy at meeting you again?”

Esther seemed perplexed, and was silent. Francis resigned her hand, which he had taken when she made her charge, and once more turned to the window.

After some moments passed in renewed silence, Esther said, in a half mortified tone,

“I wonder why the woman does not come?”

“She will be here presently,” replied Francis, in a tone of forced indifference, “I sent her to find a messenger, that I might make your friends aware of your situation.”

“I thank you, Francis.”

The young soldier lowered his head with coldness.

After some farther silence, Esther suddenly rose, and looking on Riordan, with an air of dignity and resolution, said :

“ Francis, when I knew you, you were accustomed to deal plainly and frankly with me. How long is it that you have learned this reserve to Esther ? Come here, and tell me all your history since we have parted. I have already heard the chain of the story from your man, but the manner still seems strange. We were all long since convinced of your destruction.”

A look of cold surprise preceded the answer which Francis returned to this speech. He did not know how Esther could make such a charge upon him. Reserve ? That was a singular phrase. He had no affairs that could be interesting to her ; and as to his history, it was of a piece with the story of his youth, in which she had borne so considerable a part, though the time was now so long past, that she might possibly have forgotten it.

Deeply offended by this haughty address,

Esther relapsed into silence, and did not make another effort to renew the conversation. The event showed, that she might have adopted this course with more success at the beginning, for Francis himself was now the first to speak.

He took a chair at her side, leaned his elbow for a moment on the back of that on which she was sitting, and said :

“ Esther, it may be a long time before we again have an opportunity of speaking freely together ; so I will not suffer the present to go by. Do you remember our parting ? Do you remember the circumstances which led to it ? Do you remember the pledge you gave me on that evening ? The promises you made, and the earnestness with which you gave them ? ”

“ I do, I recollect it all well, perfectly well.”

“ Have you always borne it in mind, Esther, during my absence ? ”

“ Always—I have—I have never known a feeling, Francis, of sadness, or of enjoyment, with

which the recollection of that evening was not closely intertwined."

"Indeed?"

"Indeed, Francis—Why do you speak so doubtfully?"

"What—when you gave yourself again away to——"

"Aye!" cried Esther warmly, "even then, and never half so vividly as then."

"Unworthy girl!" exclaimed Francis, starting from his seat and trembling with rage—"it is intolerable that you should insult me with such an avowal as this. I will never speak a word with you again."

"Stay, Francis—"

"Wherefore, what plea can you have to offer, after such an effrontery as that?"

"I have none," said Esther, "I have no gift at explanations. Where there is no confidence, Francis, there can be little love."

Francis could not contain a burst of wrath

at this speech. “Why, Esther,” said he, “this is the very tyranny of the passion. I hate despotism, wherever I find it, and will not abide it, even in love. I gave you all that I had in my power to bestow, when I was young and sanguine; and thought myself richly paid, by the assurance of your love. My fortunes changed; I was banished from your presence, and from my native land, and now I come again, and find you—what! do you speak of confidence? Oh, monstrous effrontery!—I find you already half another’s, my early love forgot, my long and healthy faith despised, and here you bid me to abstain from all enquiry, and rest upon my confidence alone! What confidence? That your own lips have uttered that which I am not to believe? That you have not forgotten your former promises, and that you are still free to execute all that in those days you vowed? Is this to be your plea?”

“No, Francis,” said Esther, with a trou-

bled voice, "when I spoke of confidence, I did not mean to be so strangely interpreted. I meant to say, I had no plea against the truth of all your accusation. But, I only needed your confidence, so far as to know, that nothing short of my own acknowledgment would lead you to reject me from your memory."

"And was not that avowal made this instant?"

"Far from it. An admission of deep misery is widely different from an admission of offence. Come hither, hear me patiently, and you shall be satisfied, if there be any reason in your anger."

The explanation, which followed this speech, was so far successful in appeasing the wounded affections of the young lover, that the school-master's brother, on his return home, was astonished at the warmth of devotion with which the former compensated for his passing indignation. After much debating, it was arranged that

Esther's resurrection should still be kept a secret from her friends, and another week beheld the exile and his bride (for such had Esther consented to become), occupying a small residence, on one of those lonely little lakes, which are found among the mountains in the interior of the county. The arguments which were urged by Francis, and which prevailed on Esther, to acquiesce in this procedure, it is not necessary to detail. If Nature have not already written them in the heart of the reader, it is not to be hoped that they would convince his reason, however eloquently they might be laid before him.

CHAPTER XVI.

RICHARD Lacy, in the meantime, pursued his schemes of hatred and ambition with unexhausted vigour. Strangely to his own surprize and disappointment, he found that his passion for Esther Wilderning had taken far deeper root in his heart than he had at first imagined. Every new honour that he acquired, every new addition that he made to his worldly possessions, revealed to him this truth with still encreasing force. He sometimes endeavoured to escape

from the depressing recollection, by riotous indulgences, but the very trial was certain to disgust and to recal him. He sought relief in elegant amusement, but the lion in his heart was far too fierce to be confined within a cage of golden wire. He strove to counteract the gnawing grief, by gratifying his animosity against the people of the country, and, still more, by employing every exertion, to discover the lurking place of his old enemy, and bring him within the power of the laws. But his toils were vain, and his spirits sunk day after day. A gloomy and ferocious melancholy settled on his countenance, and he wandered from place to place, the victim of disappointed love and baffled hate.

His altercations, with his creature Tobin, now became more frequent and more passionate. The latter, however, usually succeeded in restoring himself to a show of favour, by some mysterious allusions to a certain incident, in

Lacy's magisterial life, the memory of which the latter did not seem willing to have revived. Frequently, their connection seemed on the point of being suddenly dissolved, when this mystical threat came in, like an all powerful mediator, to lull the awakened storm, and to restrain, if it could not remove, the excited passions of the parties.

But all Tobin's misdeeds were forgotten, upon the instant, when he made his appearance in Lacy's office, upon one occasion, with an extraordinary piece of news. This was, that Francis Riordan had been seen the preceding evening, walking alone on one of the mountain roads in the interior of the county, and that there was little doubt that he might still be found within the reach of Lacy's commission, provided a little diligence were used in finding out precisely where.

This was a species of inquest upon which Lacy had no reluctance to enter. He set out,

accompanied by two of his police, armed, and on horseback, and consumed that night and the succeeding day, in unavailing efforts to ascertain the correctness of Tobin's information.

Wholly unconscious of the active measures that were undertaken for the disturbance of their blissful solitude, Francis and Esther were enjoying, meanwhile, the happiness of a full domestic contentment. They had prolonged their residence at Lough B ——— beyond the term which was originally proposed, and on the very evening when Lacy was returning from that excursion, which was projected for their confusion, they sat by their fire-side, talking of matters indifferent and interesting, according as they arose ; of their past adventures, of the state of the weather, which seemed to portend a storm, and of the state of the country, which promised little better.

At the desire of Francis, Esther threw open her piano, and sung some verses of the following

song, to which he entertained a liking that had its origin in past associations of place and circumstance :—

I.

Faded now, and slowly chilling,
Summer leaves the weeping dell,
While, forlorn and all unwilling,
Here I come, to say, Farewell.
Spring was green when first I met thee,
Autumn sees our parting pain ;
Never, if my heart forget thee,
Summer shine for me again !

II.

Fame invites ! her summons only
Is a magic spell to me ;
For when I was sad and lonely,
Fame it was that gave me thee.
False, she is, her slanderers sing me,
Wreathing flowers that soonest fade,
But such gifts if Fame can bring me,
Who will call the nymph a shade ?

III.

Hearts that feel not, hearts half broken,
Deem her reign no more divine ;
Vain to them are praises spoken,
Vain the light that fills her shrine.
But in mine, those joys Elysian
Deeply sink and warmly breathe ;
Fame to me has been no vision,
Friendship's smile embalms her wreath.

IV.

Sunny lakes and spired mountains,
Where that friendship sweetly grew ;
Ruins hoar and gleaming fountains,
Scenes of vanished joys, adieu !
Oh, where'er my steps may wander,
While my home-sick bosom heaves,
On those scenes my heart will ponder,
Silent, oft, in summer eves.

V.

Still, when calm the sun, down-shining,
Turns to gold that winding tide ;
Lonely, on that couch reclining,
Bid those scenes before thee glide.
Fair Killarney's sunset splendour,
Broken crag, and mountain grey,
And Glengariff's moonlight tender,
Bosomed on the heaving bay.

VI.

Yet all pleasing rise the measure
Memory soon shall hymn to thee,
Dull for me no coming pleasure,
Lose no joy for thought of me.
Oh, I would not leave thee weeping ;
But, when falls our parting day,
See thee hush'd, on roses sleeping,
Sigh unheard, and steal away !

This performance gave occasion to one of those delicious entertainments, which can only be enjoyed, when sympathy of tastes, as well as of affections, occurs, to give the highest finish to the happiness of married life. They brought down favourite authors, compared, repeated, censured, and defended, rallied each other into laughter, and argued without wilfulness, each drawing forth the other's store of talent, and talking affectionately, without the admixture of a single dose of sentiment.

In this condition they were surprised by a

visit from the schoolmaster's brother who had been a frequent guest at their cottage kitchen, since the day of their reconciliation. He had been induced to turn in, he said, as well by his anxiety to learn the condition of Mrs. Riordan's health, as by the apprehension of the approaching storm, the signs of which were every instant becoming more manifest.

Lenigan was taking a tumbler of punch by the kitchen fire-side, and expatiating on the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, with respect to the veneration of Saints, when he was summoned to the parlour, by the desire of Francis.

"David," said the latter, "do you remember having broken off your account of purgatory, in the middle, on that night, in the cottage, when we were watching together by the fire-side? I have got a book here, written by an Italian gentleman of the name of Dante, and it has so curious a resemblance to your story, that I am anxious to hear the end of it."

“What religion, masther, was that Mither Dandy, if it be his name, the gentleman that wrote that book?”

“He was a Catholic, Davy, and not only a Catholic, but a priest.”

“Oyeh! Then you may take his word for it sooner than mine, a dale, I’m sure, sir. That is,” Davy added with a nod, “providin’ it be down right in the printin’.”

“Well, for the sake of that doubt, David, let us hear the conclusion of your version.”

David complied, and having, at the repeated instances of his patron, taken a chair at a respectful distance, he proceeded with his narrative :

“Well, sir, afther lavin’ the married people that were so happy together, (may you an’ the misthress have a place among them I pray in the latther end!) they came to another gate, an’ passin’ in, they found themselves in a fine shrubbery with herbs, an’ furze, and undherwood of all sorts in great exuberance. There was a tall

rock in the middle o' the place, and on the very top of it was a goat with goolden horns, and a long beard, and the hair sweeping down to his hoofs, an' he browzing for himself on the sweetest of herbage. 'What goat is that, father?' says the boy. 'Ask himself, child, if you wish to know.' So the boy med up to the goat, an' axed him. 'If I might make so bould' says he, 'who are you that has them fine goolden horns upon your head?' 'Femoor-na-mown,' says the goat. 'Is it the common robber an' highwayman, that I seen prepared for death, myself, in our village,' says the boy, 'an' that the priest had so poor an opinion of?' 'The very same,' says the goat, 'I'm here for ever with plenty of provisions, and a house to sleep in,' says he. 'I never turned a poor man out of my house, while I was in the world, and the Almighty would'nt turn me out of his house afther I left it.'

"Well, the next field they came to, there was'nt so much as a daisy or a blade o' grass upon

the ground, and the place looking very lonesome, an' a fat elderly man tied in chains in the middle of it, cryin' an' bawlin,' an' dressed in the dirtiest rags, except the cravat that was about his neck, an' that was as white as the snow. 'That's a methodish preacher, that's tied there,' says the father, 'an' that's all the clothin' he'll ever get for all eternity.' 'An' tell me, father,' says the son, 'what is it makes the cravat so clean an' nice, an' the rest of his clothes not fit to be seen?' 'Of a day,' says the old man 'when he was out preachin', his servant maid put that cravat upon her, as a handkitcher, goin' to mass, an' it got a sprinklin' o' the holy wather in the chapel, an' that's the only clane tack he has on him,' says he, 'for all eternity.'

"Well an' good, they passed out o' that field an' they came, all at once, into a lonesome wood, with a lake as black as a cloud in the middle, an' threes as high as castles hangin' over it, an' not a sound in the place, except a poor man that was wandherin' to an' fro on the bordhers o' the lake,

an' cryin', as if all belongin' to him were sthretched. 'Oh, the day!' says he, 'that I sold my child! Oh, brother, give him back to me again! Oh, who will spread my bed, or sing to me, or keep me company, in this lonesome wood, for ever?'

" 'Do you see that man?' says the father. 'I do to be sure,' says the boy, 'what is it ails him, his cries would move the Danes?' 'That's Peter Duhig,' says the father, 'that lived a-near you formerly. He had a brother that was very rich, an' dhrove in his gig, while Pether had'nt so much as would buy *kitchen* for the piaties with his wife an' children. One evening, afther his eldest boy's death, his brother's servant was going for wather, an' he heerd some one singing most beautiful in the wood. He looked in among the threes, an' there he saw Pether's child, that was buried the week before, rovin' about, singin' and pullin' rushes. 'Erra, is that you, Johnny?' says the servant boy, 'To be sure it is,' says he.

‘What are you doin’, Johnny?’ ‘Pullin’ a bed for my father, the way he’ll have it to lie upon in heaven, when he dies,’ says the child. So the servant went home, an’ told it to his master. ‘O, then, what luck I had,’ says the master, ‘that didn’t marry, like my poor brother, an’ have childher to spread a bed for me in heaven’. Well, he went himself to learn was it fact, an’ when he did, he med off at once to the brother’s cottage, an’ offered him a farm, an’ money, if he’d only sell him the child, an’ never left him pace or quietness, until he took the offer. Well, the next time the servant went out, in place o’ hearin’ him singin’, ’tis cryin’ he heerd the child. ‘E’ what ails you, Johnny?’ says he. ‘Its little admiration I should cry,’ says Johnny, ‘an’ my father to sell me to my uncle, so that I can’t do anything now for him, but the bed that was laid for him must be given to my uncle.’ An’ sure ’twas thrue for him, for when the father came to hear of it, he got a stitch an’ died, and there’s the way with him now.”

“ ‘ An’ now, my good boy,’ says the father, ‘ it is betther for you to go no farther, for you’ll see sights, an’ hear sounds, beyond this place, that would make you a mournful man for ever. Return now to your house, do all the good you can while you live on earth, give alms to the poor, never turn away a beggar from your doore, never gridge a night’s lodgin’ to a weary traveller, be regular at mass every Sunday, and at your duty o’ Christinas an’ Easther, beware of dances and tents at the pattherns, an’ jig-houses, an’ benefits, say your prayers mornin’ an’ evenin’, an’ hearken to your parish priest; do your duty by your family an’ those dependin’ on you, take care how you lay out the mains the Almighty gave you, an’ my hand to you, the finest bed of down that was ever spread in a king’s palace upon the earth is a flinty rock in comparison of the bed that ’ll be spread for you by the angels in heaven.’ ”

“ He said the word, an’ led the boy back by another way to the gate of the house, where he

entered first. He opened a door in a high wall there, and what was the surprize o' the boy to find himself in his own garden, with the birds singin', an' the sheep bleatin', in the paddock. He went into his house, sayin' nothin' to anybody, an' he led such a life afther, that the priest himself was'nt a patch upon him for piety."

While the narrative proceeded, the wind had been gradually rising, and now moaned around the solitary dwelling, with fitful and uneasy violence. Gusts of light rain beat frequently against the window panes, and the deep purple clouds, that, during the afternoon, lay stored upon the horizon, heaved up their gloomy masses into the midst of heaven, and seemed to marshal their sullen forces, for the elemental war that was expected. The oppressive closeness which was in the air, began to diminish, and faint flashes of a reddish lightning, followed at long intervals by the muttering of distant thunder, were reflected on the bosom of the basined lake,

which lay before the cottage windows. Davy Lenigan observed, that the storm would, doubtless, be a great one; for he had seen the earth worms creeping out upon the dusty roads, as he came along, and the smoke from the cottage chimnies ascended straight, and almost without a curl, into the rare and heated atmosphere.

The heavens made good his word. The colour of the lightning shortly changed from red to a pale and vivid blue; the flashes became more frequent and irregular, and the voice of the thunder sounded nearer, louder, and clattered above the mountain tops', with short and sudden reverberations.

"There is yet enough of day light," said Francis, "to see the cascade, and the spectacle would be magnificent in such a storm as this. I will leave you here, Esther, for one hour, alone."

Esther endeavoured to dissuade him, but without success. He only took the precaution

of avoiding the common roads, on which he had been seen a few days before, by the man who had given the information to Tobin. His apprehensions had been excited by the manner in which the man stared upon him, and he was not willing to renew the danger of such an encounter.

He entered a path, leading through a glen of pine and birch wood, in which the waterfall was situate. A broken stream, half smitten into foam by the long descent, rushed through a bed of massive granite, along the pathway, and downward, toward to the lakes. The hiss and roar of the cataract was heard louder and louder among the trees, as he approached, until, at length, emerging suddenly from the leafy screen, he stood in the close area which formed the theatre of its fury. It was a dread and lonely scene. Behind him was the dense wood from which he had just escaped; on his left, a mountain, clad to the top, in rustling birch and pine; and on his

right, uprising from the bed of the torrent already alluded to, he beheld a steep, stern and precipitous, and feathered along its brow and sides with branches of the slow-waving larch, which, like the plumage on a warrior's helm, gave a softening character of grace to what would otherwise have inspired unmingled terror.

Before him, in the centre of the lonely chasm, the mighty cataract came roaring and raging downward, over the lofty ledges of rock, now flinging itself in one impetuous mass over the brow of the precipice, now split into a multitude of milky streams, now gathering its force again, and dashing its angry froth against the deep-founded masses of black rock, that seemed to shoulder its strength aside with imperturbable facility; now shooting to one side, now to the other; now, outspreading in a foamy sheet, upon a wide and sloping tablet of the everlasting granite, half screened by hanging trees; and, again, collecting its diffused volume, and falling heavily

with an exhausted splash, over a low ledge of rock, into a deep and troubled basin. Here it spun round in a ceaseless whirl, and hurried onward through the craggy torrent-bed that winded among the trees. The mountains that framed in the deep retreat, and the turf on which the beholder was standing, trembled with the far driven concussion of the mass of waters, and the foliage shivered in the breathless air. The clouds, that gathered overhead, uttered at intervals a stunning chorus to the eternal thunder of the cataract, and the flashes of blue lightning gleamed vivid on the sheeted fall, and blinded the decaying day-light.

It was a feat, which Francis had often performed, though not without some difficulty, and even danger, to climb up from rock to rock, through the very bed of the cataract, to the extreme summit, from which its waters were first precipitated into the woody glen. At times, when the river was swollen by the mountain

rains, this was an adventure wholly impracticable, and even now, though the stream was far from being flooded, there was more water than there had been on any occasion when he made the essay before. Nevertheless, it seemed by no means hopeless to attempt it, and the temptation was great, to sit upon the dark block of granite at the top, and hear the waters booming upward from the woody covert.

Descending a broken bank, he passed from rock to rock, into the bed of the torrent, and soon found himself at the base of the cataract. Without much labour, he succeeded in ascending the first and second ledge. A slight effort was requisite to enable him to reach the shelter of a massy rock, which divided the waters at a little distance above, and afforded a dry standing-place at its foot, whence one might look up and down the fall, with all the thrilling sense of insecurity, and yet with real safety. The altered condition of the stream rendered this an under-

taking of more difficulty than Francis had hitherto found it, and, when he reached the spot already described, his limbs were warm, his pulses quick, and his nerves excited to an unusual degree. He felt the more doubtful of his strength, as he knew that the upper ledge was incomparably more arduous of ascent than that on which he had but just made good his hold, and returning, by the course he had ascended, was utterly impossible. Dismissing, however, from his mind the consideration of those difficulties, he leaned against the rock, while the spray was cast upon his brow, and over his dress, and contemplated, for some moments, in silence, the awful splendour of the spectacle by which he was surrounded. The day-light was fast departing, and the extreme vividness of the electric flashes, produced, at intervals, an artificial gloom which made the glen look dark as Erebus.

The rain had long since begun to fall in

prodigious quantity. Between the pauses of the thunder, the practised ear of Francis was startled by a sound, low, deep, and distant, which came from above, and in which he fancied that he recognized a well known portent. He bent forward, to listen more attently, but a crashing peal of thunder, which broke above him at the instant, engulphed within it every other sound, and prevented him, all anxious as he was, from ascertaining the justice of his fear. The thunder died away, and he could now distinctly hear that sound of menace, with a perceptible increase of loudness, and with a noise of rushing mingled with its booming. A sudden pang of unavoidable fear first wrung his heart, and deprived him almost of the power of motion; and in the next instant, so strange an accession of life and force was in his frame, that he sprang with a light vault over the rock, and ascended very near the summit of the next ledge, by efforts far sur-

passing any that he could have made under an ordinary excitement. One farther bound was necessary, to enable him to secure his hold upon a horn of the rock above, but his breath failed, and he paused for a moment's rest. Looking to his feet, he saw the yellow tinge growing on the face of the torrent, and the waters seemed to swell. But the lessening light might have given the hue which he feared. He looked up to the summit, a mist steamed upward through the overhanging trees, he sprung and clasped the rock, swung up his person to the crag, and, in the action, caught a glimpse of the terrific mass of yellow waters, bounding with a roar of fury over the summit and down-bursting on his head. Once more upon his feet, another spring, and he twined his arms close around the trunk of a young mountain ash, just as the tawny volume thundered down the steep, and dashed its discoloured foam upon his feet, and on the bank to which he

clung, relieved in mind, exhausted and bewildered in heart and brain.

He closed his eyes, for a moment, in a pause of deep-felt gratitude; and, when he opened them again, beheld the flood burying in its headlong depth, all traces of the path by which he had ascended, and suffering only a few black points of rock to remain uncovered by the yellow foam. Several trees had been felled by the stroke of the impetuous element, and went crashing down the glen. A rock, time-bedded in the aged cliff, was uprooted from its strong foundation, and sent thundering from ledge to ledge, showing its dark bulk at intervals above the hoary torrent, and settling, at last, with a prodigious crash, in the centre of the basin. Out-chorussed on the earth, the heavens themselves seemed now to sink their voices, and their thunders died away with a diminished echo in the abyss of distance.

Turning away from this stupendous sight, he

was about to follow the uneven path, which led from the brink of the cataract to the hill-top, when the voice of David Lenigan, apparently influenced by some deep emotion, made him stop short upon his track. Presently, he saw the man-hurrying towards him, and waving his hand rapidly with a cautionary action.

“Run! run! sir,” he exclaimed, “or you are taken! Down! down into the wood, or Lacy has you with his Peelers!”

“Lacy!”

“He is on the hill; down, down, sir, for the love of mercy!”

Excited as he was, it was easy to change the current of Riordan's passion, from that of terror, into that of rage. Without returning any answer to the attendant, he hurried up the hill, and appeared upon the summit exactly in time to encounter his enemy, alone and seeming nearly as exhausted, and at the

same time as excited, as himself. Each knew the other at a glance, and Lacy sprang from his horse, and abandoned the reins in his eagerness to confront his enemy on even ground.

“We are met again!” cried Riordan.

“Aye,” returned his foe, “but not upon the same terms as when we encountered at Drummogoff. Villain, you are my prisoner, at length.”

“Mercy forbid!” said Riordan, with bitter force, “I do not feel your fetters on my hands; I do not see your creatures at my side; I can defy you Lacy, and the woe that Fortune has committed to your keeping, and that you never yet refrained from flinging on the head of a beseeching countryman. O, that we should have met after so many years, to wreak our hate in such a spot as this! For I do hate you, Lacy, as I hate death and pain!”

“And with good reason,” said his enemy, “for I would be both to you! and will, unless the devil should come between. Come with me,

and offer no resistance, if you wish not to anticipate a fate, that, by my heart, I am glad to promise you. Aye, by my heart, most glad. O what a curse you've always been to me! Come on, or you die suddenly. Do you remember Roundwood? Ha! Do you remember Esther Wilderming? Death strike me, if I do not hate you deadly."

"I take your simple word for it," said Francis, "without an oath."

"Do you? You shall have a deed of it, a note of hand, with fifty witnesses; but the gallows will do better than the whole. Faith, I will hang you shortly."

"I doubt not your good will."

"Oh, that this cursed law were deep in hell, and I would make that lip incapable of laughter with a brace of balls. I do not wonder at your smirking. I remember you, a cold and passionless dolt, without heart enough to relish the happiness that was designed for you, and the idle hope of

which almost put me beyond my reason.—Well !” he continued, suffering his trembling arms to drop motionless by his side, gazing on Riordan, with a look of wonder and contempt, and speaking, as if with his own mind. “ That such a keen-eyed angel should have bent her smiles upon a clod like that ! Her lightest breath, heard through the garden boughs, would make my blood run back upon my heart, and shake my soul down to its foundation ; I have watched for her calm cold salute at meeting and at parting, as I would have done for the tidings of my life or death, and yet I have seen this lump of common earth placed by her side, endure her smiles, her converse, her love-speaking glances, aye, even her caresses, without a change within his eye, or on his countenance. And see now here, if his hate be not as worthless as his love.—Let me be cursed in your friendship,” he exclaimed aloud, “ if I despise you not more heartily for the indolence of your enmity, than I could hate you for the worst evil—your utmost

diligence could inflict upon me ! I hate and I despise you !”

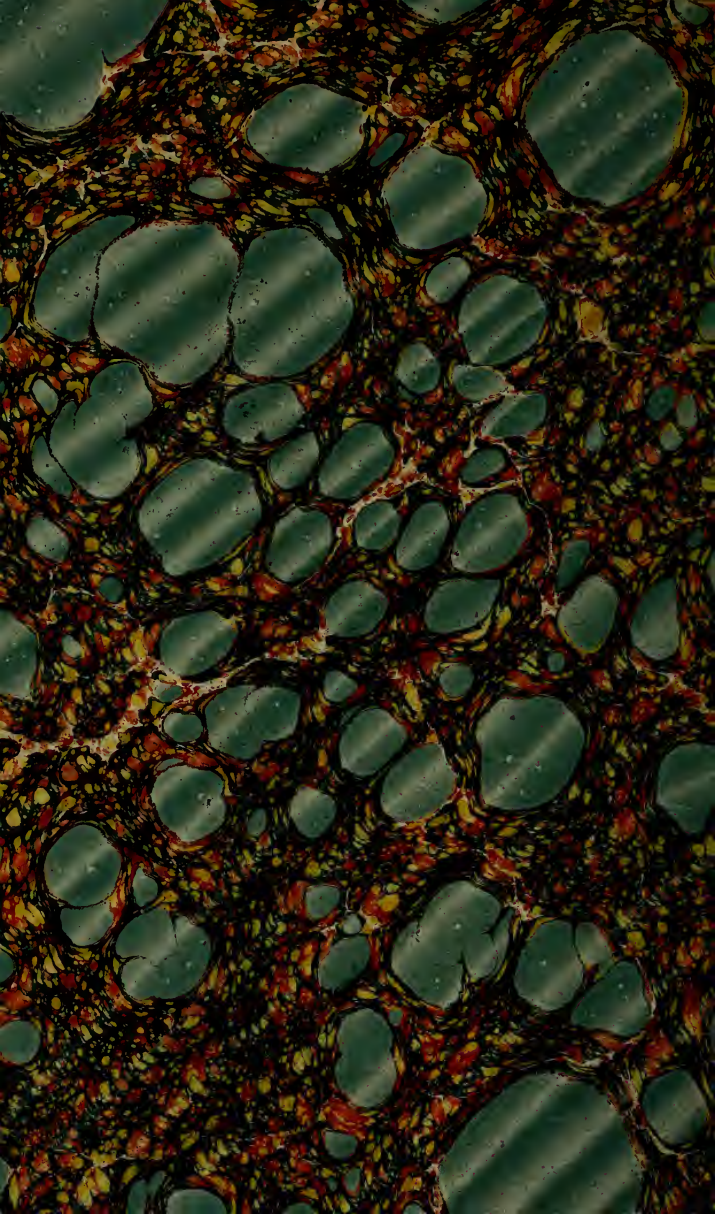
“ I hate not you,” said Francis, “ more than I hate the reptile that I seek to crush for my own ease and that of my fellow men. I could not hate a thing like you, without mind or principle to restrain the animal impulse that bids it sting wherever it can do an injury. And as to scorn, I keep my scorn for those who, in some points at least, can mortify my pride. To you, I can feel nothing, as you truly said, but simple, cold, and passionless dislike.”

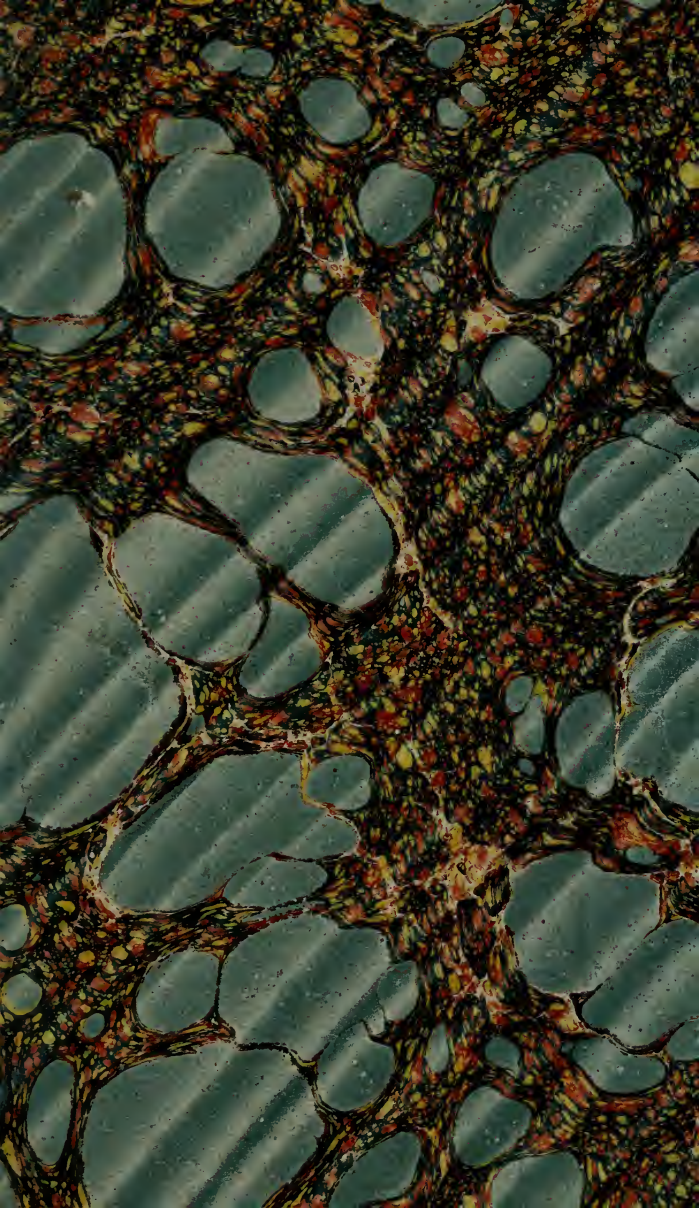
At these words Lacy glanced to the right and left, and then, suddenly, levelled a pistol at Riordan. The latter, aware of his intention, sprang at his throat, struck down the weapon, which exploded in the struggle, and then lifting his enemy quite off the earth, hurled him down the slope with great violence. He gazed for a moment upon the fallen man, as he lay stunned at the foot of an old pine, and then, hearing the

tramp of horses, hurried swiftly downward through the wood.

The persons who approached were Tobin and the two police men, who had accompanied Lacy. Directed by his moans, as he began to revive, they hastened to his assistance, and conveyed him slowly in the direction of Riordan's cottage.

END OF VOL. 1.





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